

TRUTH

Freethought

by Three Men

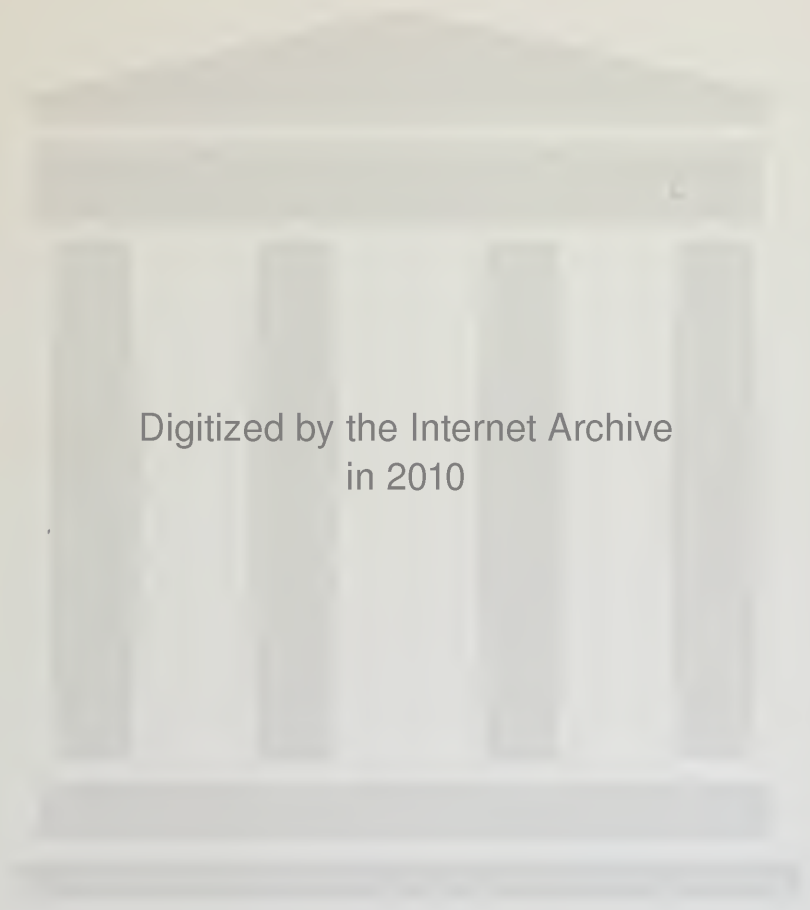
D.M. Bennett

G. Vincent Runyon

James Hervey Johnson

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Truth Seeker Books is pleased to present:

Freethought by Three Men

D.M. Bennett

G. Vincent Runyon

James Hervey Johnson

Dedicated to James Hervey Johnson whose efforts
made this edition possible.

Freethought by Three Men.
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Freethought by Three Men

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D. M. Bennett

D. M. Bennett was the founder of the Truth Seeker in Albany, New York in 1873. As the leading freethinker of his day, he is remembered for his many articles challenging the dogmas of his times. As the first Editor of the Truth Seeker, he laid a foundation that has lasted to the end of the twentieth century. His vision, tolerance and understanding are expressed in his statement: "Come now and let us reason together; Let us hear all sides; Let us divest ourselves of prejudice and the effects of early education; Let us prove all things and hold fast to that which is good."

Open Letter to Jesus Christ

by D.M. Bennett

It is quite possible some people may deem it improper that a letter addressed to the distinguished personage named above should be written, but we cannot so regard it. Countless prayers and appeals are daily made to him from all sorts of people, from all sorts of places, and upon all sorts of subjects. Every one says or asks what he pleases, and no man is authorized to dictate what shall be said. A prayer is an appeal, a letter is another form of appeal. Any individual has a right to either form. That a letter is any more improper than a prayer is not obvious, and in this case a letter is preferred:

To His Excellency, IMMANUEL J. CHRIST otherwise called "Prince of Peace," "Sun of Righteousness." "Lion of the Tribe of Judah;" "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "The Messiah," "The Redeemer," "The Savior," "The Bridegroom," "The Lamb of God," "Captain of our Salvation," "Son of God," "Son of Man;" etc., etc.

Respected Sir: Learning from our daily papers that it is expected you will pass a few days in our immediate vicinity, in company with your agents, Moody and Sankey, who are supposed to be in your special service, and who have just commenced a grand starring engagement through our principal cities, in your interest, I embrace this opportunity to address you in this manner, hoping I may be able to attract your attention and to receive a reply. I am in quest of truth, and many say it is to be found with you, and to attain any good gift whatsoever of you, it is only necessary to ask. I wish knowledge and information on many subjects, and I hereby make my wants known, I trust with due respect and in a proper spirit. If I have not troubled you latterly as often as many do, I hope it will not disparage my chances of recognition.

If your memory serves you, you probably can bring to mind that something over a quarter of a century ago I was in the habit of addressing you regularly four or five times a day, and from one year's

end to another, but finally coming to the conclusion that my appeals were not heard, or that they availed me nothing, I discontinued them, thus saving much time and breath, as well as disappointment also, and losing nothing, so far as I was able to judge. After a silence of more than twenty-five years, it is hoped this effort will be successful, but if it is not, I shall not be greatly surprised.

I shall not have room in one letter to enquire of you all I wish to know, but if I am successful in obtaining answers to these questions, I may some time address you again, but, in any event, I trust approach you in a proper spirit, and that I give no offence. I wish not to be impertinent, but to indicate to you the points upon which I need light. If you are truly the source of light, may I not hope to be successful?

In nearly all the lives and biographies that have been written of you, a great lack exists of a description of the days of your infancy, childhood, and youth. How is it that the "Evangelists," who are said to have been divinely delegated to write your life and teachings, should have been so silent in reference to this interesting portion of your existence?

Were those items purposely suppressed, or was it simply accidental?

Should not a truthful record of you have contained a full account of your early life as well as your later?

There is a great uncertainty relative to the origin of your existence; the account we have seems to rest largely upon a dream which it is said your stepfather dreamed. May I ask you, is that account reliable?

Is a dream of such a nature and character - that too, when related by a third person - as to safely build the faith of a world upon, especially when the final salvation of that world depends upon the correctness and infallibility of that faith?

Were you begotten by the Creator of the Universe?

Were you begotten by the same process as all other beings have been; who have lived in this world, or was it out of the ordinary course of nature?

Did love have ought to do in the transaction? and if so, was it an example of "free-love?"

Did the occurrence cause any scandal in the neighborhood, and was it generally understood that your step-father had dreamed out the true theory?

Your friends, the clergy, assert that you existed as an individual from all eternity, and that your begetting and birth, eighteen hundred and seventy-five years ago, was merely a formality for the purpose of endowing you with the quality of mortality. Is that so?

Did you, then retain your consciousness during the nine months of your gestation? If so, may I ask, did not such close confinement for so long a period become irksome?

Had you full consciousness during the days of your infancy?

Was the star which was said to point out to the wise men who sought you in the stable in which you was born, a real star like others, millions of miles away, and which are immense bodies of matter, or was it a little star gotten up especially for the occasion and which moved near the surface of the earth?

Was it so important that those men from the East should find you, while yet a new-born babe, that a star should be delegated to leave its course to point out to them your precise locality?

Do you remember the critical period of "cutting teeth"?

Was there any "Mrs. Winslow" in those days to prepare "Soothing Syrup" for the babies?

Were you much troubled with colic, croup, bowel-complaint, or worms?

At what age did you have the mumps, the measles, and the whooping-cough? Did you have them light or severe?

Did you wear petticoats when you were little, and can you remember your first pair of pants?

Can you remember when you first began to run out of doors and play with the boys and girls?

Did you know, when you was a little boy, that you were God, and the Ruler of the Universe?

Is it true as narrated in the New Testament styled "Apocryphal," that when you were a small child and traveling with your mother, she placed you on the back of a mule that, by enchantment, had been changed from a young man, and that you transformed him back to a young man again?

Is it true that you rolled up clay in the form of birds, and then made them fly away in the air?

Did the water in which your mother had washed you cure two sick children? Did you cause a boy to die because he carelessly ran against you?

Did you go to school and did you like to study? Did you learn rapidly?

Did you know all things from all time, including the ordinary branches of education taught in schools, or did you have to study and learn like other boys?

Did you ever play hookey? Were you fond of boyish sports?

Were marbles, "hop-scotch," leap-frog and base-ball in vogue at that time?

Did you ever fall in love with any girls of your age, and if so, did anything serious come of it?

How old were you when you commenced working at the carpenters' trade?

Did you stretch boards, doors, etc., for your stepfather when he made them too short?

How did you like the carpentering business? If you were God, and knew all things past, present, and future, why did you not get up some such inventions as sawing mills, planing mills, mortising machines, matching machines, or scroll and circular saws, which for the last fifty years have proved themselves so valuable in saving labor?

Why did you not leave some such invention behind you to assist in immortalizing your name?

How came you to quit the carpenters' business? Was it not a good trade at that time?

Did you like preaching and performing miracles better?

Have you ever doubted whether your first miracle, changing water into wine, at the wedding in Cana, was well advised, especially as the guests were already drunk?

Have you not many times, with sadness noticed the bad effects of intemperance and the undue use of intoxicating drinks?

Have you ever thought that the miracle alluded to was setting a bad example to young people and an encouragement to wine-bibbers?

Did it ever occur to you that it was not strictly moral, and not according to the commandments, to go into other people's corn fields on the Sabbath and pluck corn, without permission?

Upon mature reflection, do you still think you were right and reasonable when you got angry at the fig-tree and cursed it because it did not bear figs at an untimely season of the year?

Was it not offering a reward for theft - a premium for crime—to demand when a man's coat is stolen that his cloak also should be given to the thief?

Do you now think it would be sensible for a man to pluck his eye out if he had gotten dirt in it, if it became inflamed, or if any defect in the sight occurred?

If a man should have a boil or a felon on his right hand, would you still advise him to cut it off?

Would it not be better to remove the offending disease, rather than destroy the organ or part brought into affliction?

Do you at present think it was amiable and filial in you to treat your mother with disrespect, as when you asked, "Who is my mother?"

May I ask, do you still require your followers to hate father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children, on your account?

Does it afford you any pleasure for a man to hate his own blood relations?

Is it a correct principle in morals, that a person be required to hate his parents, his brothers and sisters, wife and children?

Do you still think it kind and god-like to damn people to endless punishment because they do not believe that which they cannot believe?

Can a person believe just what he pleases, whether convinced or not?

Do you still think the example of mendicancy and idleness the best example you could have set your fellow-men?

Is not the doctrine, "take no thought for the morrow," calculated to prevent enterprise, thrift, and forethought? Would we have anything to eat in winter, if we did not prepare for it in summer?

Was it strictly right for you to instruct your disciples to take an ass or a mule to which they had no right?

Was it a mark of amiability and peacefulness on your part to whip, and beat, and scourge the money-changers and those who sold merchandise in the temple?

Would you not have a lively time now, were you to scourge with cords all who are engaged in that business?

Can you explain the discrepancy between your prediction and its fulfillment, as to the end of the world, when you said: "Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away until all these things are fulfilled?"

Did you not at that time think the end of the world was near at hand, and were you not mistaken?

When you went without food for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, did you not endanger your life? Can a man now go forty days without food or drink, and live?

When the Devil took you up into a very high mountain and showed you all the kingdoms of the earth, did he carry you, as boys say, "pig-back," or in what way did he carry you?

How high was the mountain?

Could you see the countries on the opposite side of the globe any better for going on to a high mountain?

Did you get a good view of Rhode Island and New Jersey?

Did you at that time know the earth is a round ball, or did the person know it who wrote the account?

Did you know at the time you were accompanying the Devil on this mountain trip, that he was your deadliest foe, as well as the great enemy of the human race?

When you were riding on his back through the air, why did you not embrace the opportunity and choke the villain to death?

Would it not have been the greatest favor you possibly could have conferred upon the human race?

Would it not have been vastly better than to be yourself put to death?

Did it please your loving Father better that you should die, than his old enemy and creature, the Devil?

Did your blood pacify his disturbed feelings better than the Devil's would?

Does blood actually appease your Father's anger?

Did not the blood of bullocks, rams and he-goats, formerly have that effect?

Does he still have a fondness for blood?

Were the chemical constituents of your blood materially different from other men's, that it could exert a more potent effect upon the anger of your Father?

If it was either through the plan of your Father, or through the intrigues of the Devil that you were put to death, was there not partiality and injustice in the business?

Did it do your Father any good, or the Devil any harm, for you to die?

Would it not have been better for your Father, for yourself and for the whole world, if the Devil could have been the one to be put to death and then had remained dead?

What was the Devil ever made for?

Was it not the greatest mistake, the greatest folly that was ever committed?

Had there been no Devil, would not everything have been lovely with everybody, and would there have been any one to vex your Father?

Does not the Devil get fully nine-tenths of the whole human family, and does he not annoy your Father and yourself more than all the world besides?

Why is it you still suffer him to live?

Is it because you need him to officiate as Chief-Burner-General in the nether regions of brimstone, and to carry out your will in pitching and punching and burning poor hapless beings to the latest moments of eternity, and who had no hand in bringing themselves into existence or in getting up the vile natures with which they are endowed?

Is there not really a tacit, secret understanding - a partnership in fact - between the Devil, your Father and yourself?

Does not the Devil carry out the wishes of your Father and yourself, in punishing and tormenting his helpless victims?

Could he be more faithful in your service, if he occupied the same throne with you?

If men act badly, or fail to meet the approbation of your Father or yourself, does not Christian theology teach that the Devil torments them for it?

Would your grand scheme of salvation be worth anything without the Devil?

Is not the Devil in the divine programme a personage equally as important as your Father or yourself? Could you get along without a Devil?

Would the system of theology which we have in this country, and which is attributed to you, be worth a row of pins without a Devil in it?

Could your sixty thousand clergymen in this country, or the six hundred thousand in Christendom, get along without a Devil? Would their business pay running expenses except for a Devil to warm it up?

Really, after all, considering how much the Devil has done toward carrying out the divine plan concocted by your father and yourself; how much he has done for the human race by introducing education, science, inventions, innovations, and Freethought, into the world, while your clergymen and your church have been doing all they could to keep them out, is he not, after all, a pretty good fellow?

Is he really as cruel and relentless as the clergy represent him?

Is it your Father or the Devil that is the most revengeful and unforgiving?

Let me ask you, can you be happy in heaven, seated on the throne at the right hand of your Father, the four beasts near, with the hundred and forty-four thousand saints dressed in white robes, bowing continually before your throne, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, that song which no man can learn; I ask, can you be happy thus, while you know the poor, wretched, unfortunate damned are writhing and screaming in the torments of hell?

Do not the shrieks of the damned wretches sometimes penetrate even to your throne and overpower, for the moment, that continuous song of Moses & Co.?

Can you be completely happy thus surrounded, when you know countless millions of poor, weak creatures are suffering the most excruciating tortures?

Infidel, as I am, I could not be happy under such circumstances, and were I to believe it possible that ninety-nine hundredths of the human race are doomed to forever suffer such tortures without cessation or alleviation, I should heartily curse existence and the author of it.

Would it not be vastly better to allow those pitiful wretches to go out of existence than to keep them in endless torment?

What possible good can it do your Father, yourself or any being to punish eternally quintillions of poor fallible men and women?

Is there no possibility of ending this most wretched and damnable business?

To return; when the Devil took you up into that high mountain, to show you all the kingdoms of the earth, and when he offered them to you, did you not know that he did not own a foot of them, and that they belonged to the estate of your Father?

If you knew this, was it much of a virtue in you that you did not accept his offer and yield to temptation?

Do you think it was a sharp thing in the Devil to undertake to play such a game with a God?

Was not the Devil, who could transport you on to the top of a high mountain, equally as large and as strong as yourself?

Was he the same Devil, or the same sized Devil that you subsequently cast out of the wild man you found raving among the tombs?

If that was a full-sized Devil, how could he get into the man?

Mark says the Devil left the man and went into two thousand swine; were there two thousand devils in the man, or did the one Devil divide up into two thousand parts?

When the two thousand swine rushed down a steep place into the sea and were drowned, what became of the Devils? Were they drowned, or did they enter the fishes?

Mark says all these Devils were in one man, and Matthew says there were two men that had the Devils, which was correct? Did Matthew see double?

If one told the truth, did not the other tell a false-hood?

If you sent those devils into two thousand hogs, thus causing their destruction, is it strange that the people, when they learned the fact, wished you to depart from their coasts?

Would any of our Western stock-growers welcome your visit now, if you should thus cause the destruction of their herds?

Were those devils that you sent into the swine the same kind as the seven Devils which you extracted from Mary Magdalene?

What was the size of those seven devils? Where did they enter, and where did they make their exit?

Is not all this business devilish strange, any way?

If your death was necessary to the happiness of the world, to the serenity and peace of your Father's mind; if you had to die, that one in ten, or one in a hundred of poor, doomed humanity might escape the suffering vouchsafed to all the rest, and by which grand process your Father is to be eternally glorified, did not Judas play a commendable part?

If you had to be betrayed before you could be tried and crucified, was not the betrayal most essential?

If this is so, is it not wrong to despise Judas and hold him in detestation for the important work he performed?

Should not he rather be canonized by your Church as a saint of the first water?

How could a single being ever have found salvation, had there been no Judas?

Were not the Jewish priests who urged on your death and destruction, also important factors in the grand, divine scheme?

Were not the Roman soldiers who performed the closing part of the melodrama, also worthy of special honor and distinction?

If you knew the results of your death, in redeeming a few doomed souls from the burning sea of sulphur, were of such vast importance, why did you so dread the special work you came to perform - the glorious death you came to die?

Was there aught of fear or faltering in your mind and courage when you so frantically reproached your Father for forsaking you?

Did you really think he had turned his back upon you, when you cried out so piteously, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" (My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me)?

Do you think you met death as bravely as did Socrates, Regulus, and numerous others of those brave heroes of olden times?

Should a God, in facing death, have less courage, less fortitude, and less equanimity than a man?

Did you know that your death would be the most glorious event in the whole history of the world?

Did you consider it any more for you to die than for any other individual to pass through the same ordeal?

Have not hundreds of thousands of men and women endured the pains of dissolution with far more fortitude than you did, though their sufferings were many times greater?

Let me ask you was the six hours during which you were suspended on the cross sufficient to take a man's life?

Did you absolutely die, or was it merely a case of fainting or swooning?

Did darkness cover the earth in consequence of your suspension upon the cross? Where was the sun during those three hours?

Was an earthquake, also produced in consequence of your sufferings, and did the graves open and the dead walk out alive and mix again with their former companions?

If this extraordinary affair really occurred, why was Matthew the only one of your biographers to notice it, when mere trivial events were minutely related by all, and why did not some historian say something about it?

Did you keep the engagement you made at that time with the thief, that he should be that day with you in paradise?

Did you not, rather, take the opposite direction and spend the interim between your death and resurrection in the heart of the earth, according to your prediction, or "in hell," as the Bible and Apostles' Creed have it?

Did you not find the interior of the earth intensely hot, and a very uncomfortable place to be in?

If you were to pass three days in the heart of the earth did it not necessitate you traveling four thousand miles through dense, super-heated matter to get there?

Did you not find the great density of matter a great impediment to your travel?

If it was foretold by yourself and others that you should be three days in the heart of the earth, how could you make two nights and one day fill the bill?

Are one day and two nights - aggregating at the most forty-eighty hours - equal to three days, or seventy-two hours?

Had the extreme heat of the interior of the earth anything to do with your returning before your time was up?

Did you not make excellent time to go four thousand miles to the heart of the earth and return in two nights and a day? Did you have much time to tarry there?

Let me ask you as to your Ascension; did your physical body, the same that was laid in the sepulchre, ascend?

How high did your journey extend?

Did you not find the upper air extremely rare and intensely cold?

Can a physical body of flesh and blood exist for ten minutes at a distance of ten miles from the earth?

As the earth travels through space at a velocity of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour, does that fact make any difference as to the direction, route or distance from earth to heaven?

How is it that the four evangelists differ so widely in reference to your Ascension, Matthew representing that you ascended from a mountain in Galilee, Mark stating that the Ascension took place in a room where the eleven were at meat, Luke having it that you led your disciples out to Bethany, where you made your Ascension, while John says nothing about your going up at all?

How could such an important event in your career be so differently stated by the four?

If either was right, were not the others wrong?

Should not persons divinely inspired to write an account of such an extraordinary event be able to agree better in their versions?

Would such kind of testimony have any value in an ordinary court of justice?

Could a case of sheep stealing be established on such evidence?

Has the great similarity between many characters in the heathen mythologies and your own, ever attracted your attention?

Are you not aware that the main facts, or what are claimed as facts, in your history, appear to have been copied from similar legends pertaining to preexisting individuals?

Were not Buddha, Krishna, Sakia, Zulis, Bacchus, Hercules, Alcides, Hesus, and several others who lived, or were claimed to have lived, hundreds of years before, said to have been born of virgins and to have a God for a father?

Should the world hold these personages in holy reverence because it is said of them, they were begotten by Gods and without their mothers losing their virginity?

Have we not as much proof of this remarkable conception in each of these cases, as in your own, when Yours only rests on a dream?

Can the mere assertion, in either case, be sufficient to demand the belief of any sensible person?

Was it not said of many of them, that they had disciples, to whom they taught excellent morals, and before whom they performed wonderful miracles?

As the stories about them are much older than yours, would it be fair to suppose theirs were copied from yours?

Were not Krishna, Sakia, Thammuz, Wittoba, Lao, Hesus, Quexalcote, Quirinus, Prometheus, Thulis, Indra, Alcestos, Atys, Crite, Bali, Mithra, and still others, all of whom lived centuries before your time claimed to have been crucified as expiations for the sins of the world?

Is not the proof that these personages lived and died in the manner represented, equally reliable and probable as in your case?

Were not the believers in those ancient creeds and superstitions just as sincere, just as honest, and just as virtuous as those who believe in you?

If your life and death upon the earth were a divine plan, devised in heaven, is it not a little singular that it should be so perfect a pattern after so many similar schemes previously gotten up by pagan religionists?

Is God under the necessity of borrowing his plans from barbarians and ignorant heathens?

Is not the striking similarities between the various mythologies the world has known, enough to cause any thinking person to believe each system was borrowed from some similar system?

As Christianity is the youngest mythology of the lot, does it not seem probable that it is wholly a plagiarism?

When you uttered your best and grandest sentiments and morals, did you know that the same had been uttered by many, hundreds of years earlier?

Do you know it now?

Do you know that what is called the "Golden Rule," was written much earlier and taught by Confucius Pittacus, Socrates, Sextus, Isocrates Hillel, and others, who all lived before you?

Did you give any of these persons credit for any of the sentiments borrowed from them?

Were not the sentiments and morals taught by these old pagans, when the same as yours, equally as worthy of veneration and praise as when uttered by yourself?

Had not nearly every moral sentiment which was attributed to you been taught by others before you?

Is an given maxim or truth more true, or more beautiful for being spoken by a God or demigod?

Is not the same maxim when pronounced by a man just as true and as admirable as when from a God?

Is it just to transfer to any individual the credit and honor that has been earned by another?

Would it not be just as right that we should revere and honor Confucius, Pythagoras, Plato, and others for the excellent morals they have taught, as to give you all the praise for inculcating the same?

Have you observed the striking coincidence between the accounts of yourself and of Apollonius of Tyana, who was born before you, and did not die until after you did?

Are you not aware that he was said to have practiced great self-denial, to have given away his worldly possessions, to have spent his time in prayer and meditation; to have had a band of disciples whom he instructed in godliness and virtue; that he performed wonderful miracles, among which was raising the dead?

Are you conscious that the evidence of such a person having existed, is stronger than of your own, and that he traveled more extensively; that he lived to be an old man; that he established institutions of learning, and wrote many works that were handed down to posterity, and which is more than is true of you?

Had this character, by any fortunate circumstances - this demigod, as he was esteemed to be - been taken as the deity of Europe, or the head of its theology, would not his name have been as widely spread and as greatly revered as your own now is, and as justly?

Are you not aware that there is great uncertainty relative to the account of your career on the earth?

Do you not know that there is no proof of what are called the "four gospels" being in existence before the latter part of the second century; that none of the "early fathers" ever referred to them or mentioned them before Eusebius, who died in the fore part of the third century?

With the knowledge we have of the many frauds that were committed by the early fathers (and which they claim, too, were right and justifiable) are there not good grounds for doubting much of the story about yourself?

Were there not abundant chances at that time for narratives to be gotten up and palmed off as genuine ?

Were there not more than forty of such gospel stories gotten up by different individuals, with about as much truth in the one as in the others?

Is it not most probable that they were all wrong?

Are you aware that the 'four gospels were not decided by the church to be canonical till the fourth century, and that the other books of the New Testament were not taken into the Bible till the sixth century," and that the councils of contentious and fighting bishops and priests who assembled together to decide which and what should be the word of God, indulged in a great amount of quarreling upon the subject, and that in one contest over the matter one bishop was kicked to death?

Is it strange, with these facts before us, that incredulous people honestly doubt the reliability and divinity of the book called the Bible?

Is it strange, in view of the great similarity between your life and teachings and those of your predecessors, that many should doubt the probability of your existence?

Is it not a fact that all the rites, ceremonies, sacraments, and usages of the creed called by your name are traceable directly back to pre-existent heathenism?

If this is true, can there be any harm in the world being apprised of it, and understanding the facts as they are?

If Christianity in the dark ages of the world has served a purpose and assisted somewhat in helping man to emerge from the mists, falsities, and superstitions of the primitive ages, does it follow that he should always continue to hug it to his bosom as a truth?

In fact, is it not time the world discarded all mythologies, man-made gods, mental crudities, absurdities, monstrosities, falsities, senseless creeds, superstitions, and impositions?

Are not Truth, Science, Reason, Fraternal Love, and Human Brotherhood vastly superior to all these?

Have not many of the propagandists of your religion been most bloody tyrants?

Was not Constantine, who murdered many of his own family, of this number?

Were not Charlemagne, Guy Lusignan, Torquemada, Alva, Philip II, John Calvin, Munzer, Claverhouse, and very many others of the same category?

Has not the religion called after your name caused more bloodshed, more persecution, and more suffering than all the other religions of the world?

When the terrible slaughters, massacres, and murders that have been committed in your name and in your cause, came to your knowledge, why did you not sometimes interpose and prevent these abominations?

Did you approve of that infernal institution called the "Holy Inquisition" which for five hundred years cursed the most populous portions of Europe, and before which hellish courts were dragged at

all hours of day and night, men and women, helpless, defenseless victims of priestly suspicion, avarice, and malice; and where without evidence or means of defense they were slowly and cruelly tortured on racks, wheels, and infernal machines of every possible conception, and where hot pincers, pulleys, thumb-screws, and the stake and fagot were used in thousands of instances?

Could you hear the cries and groans of these poor, helpless, tortured wretches, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after year, century after century, and never feel a particle of sympathy for the sufferers, and never stretch forth your hand or lift a finger to stay these most accursed wrongs?

Did you participate in the wars of the Crusades, when Christian Europe sent so many of her hardiest and bravest sons to wrest the Holy Land from the possession of the Infidel, which terrible wars lasted many years, and which caused the blood of scores of millions of human beings to saturate the earth?

Did you take part in other Christian wars by which unknown thousands and millions of hapless mortals were made to bite the dust?

Did you assist in the bloody persecutions, which continued for centuries, that were directed against the sincere, well-disposed, but most unfortunate Vaudois, Waldenses, Albigenses, the Moors of Spain, and the Huguenots of France, in which unparalleled cruelties of every conceivable character and the most profuse bloodshed took place?

If you did not aid in all this most infernal business transacted in your name, and by your church, were you totally unconscious of it?

If you knew of it, and possessed the power to stay the red hand of blood, the heavy hand of oppression, or the strong hand of death in this long night of gloom and horror, why in the name of all that is good, all that is merciful, all that is high and holy, why did not you, or your all-powerful father, stretch forth your hands and stay these gigantic wrongs?

Could beneficence, mercy and love sit benignantly, placidly, and smilingly on a golden throne, with all power at hand, and never raise an arm to check this mad monster savageism, intolerance, cruelty,

and death, which for so many long, weary years, in the name of the Christian religion, cursed the fairest portions of the earth?

As a God or as a man, have you at any time dispensed to the human race the blessings which would have been of the greatest value to them?

Would not natural truths, science, positive knowledge, and general education have been of infinitely more value to the world than the gift of your blood, or the relics of ancient paganism which you handed down, or which have been forced upon the world in your name?

Did not your bishops, your priests, and your church, a few centuries ago, do all in their power to hold back advancing lights, intelligence, education, and science?

Were not the great discoverers of the truths of nature, the noble emancipators of our race from the rule of ignorance and error, systematically and persistently hunted down and persecuted?

Were not books, schools, and the printing press time and time again denounced as of the devil's agencies and opposed by Christian zealots to the extent of their power?

Were not the masses purposely kept in ignorance and filled with superstitious fallacies by those who claimed to be their religious and Christian teachers and guides?

Has not the advance which the world has made in education, science, and general intelligence been made in spite of, and in opposition to Christian leaders and the Christian church?

Let me ask you right here, As God, or as man, are you, or were you ever acquainted with what are called the Sciences?

Do you understand astronomy, chemistry, geology, biology, physiology, psychology, philology, mathematics, geometry, natural philosophy, and natural history in all its branches?

Are these not all valuable and beneficial to the human race and do they not help greatly in elevating man above the plane of barbarism, sensuality, and ignorance?

If you had known these, and had taught them to the world, would it not have been immensely better than to give Your blood or to retail the mysticisms, parables, fables, beatitudes, and the impracticable injunctions which you presented to the world?

Is it not better and wiser now to follow in the Light of science, reason, and truth than to adhere longer to any of the mythologies, superstitions, and absurdities of the past?

Has not man advanced as far as he has, by his own efforts, and is it not vastly better for him to depend upon his own powers, and to exercise them. rather than to look to gods, demigods, popes, bishops, or priests?

Have not these held the world back in ignorance, darkness, and slavery for thousands of years?

Has not your church been signalized by the fallibility, vice, and ignorance of many of its leaders and rulers?

Have you been mindful of the villainous popes who have, from time to time, filled the papal chair, and who claimed to be your vicegerents and special favorites ?

Did you approve the conduct of Gregory the Great in the sixth century, who was an aspiring, unscrupulous despot, notorious for his profligacy, cruelty, and crimes, and who sanctioned one of the most bloody assassinations ever perpetrated?

Was John XII in the tenth century a favorite of yours, who was an unscrupulous libertine, gambler, debauchee, and murderer, and who turned the Vatican into a brothel?

How did you like John XXIII in the fifteenth century, who was proved to have been guilty of seventy different kinds of crime, among which were sodomy, simony, rape, incest, and murder, and with having illicit intercourse with over three hundred nuns?

Do you not remember the delectable Alexander VI in the fifteenth century, who was guilty of incest, who seduced his own daughter, who was the father of many illegitimate children, and reeked in the most abominable crimes, and among the rest murder?

Can you approve of the conduct of many of your modern clergymen who have claimed to be bright lights in your galaxy of stars?

Have you not often had occasion to blush with shame and to redden with indignation at the base conduct of hundreds - yes, thousands of licentious hypocrites who try to pass themselves off as shepherds and leaders of your flock?

Are not the ewe-lambs specially exposed to their seductive wiles and artifices, their sensual plots and lascivious designs?

Is it an indication of the purity and goodness of a cause when so many false lights and teachers are claiming to represent it?

Do not the clergymen, who loudly preach in your name, do quite as much to corrupt the morals of the world as they do to improve them?

Is not money, which in your book is called "filthy lucre - the root of all evil," the main incentive which induces your clergy to engage in your cause?

Would their great love for "souls" impel them to devote their talent and lives to the work if the pay was not forthcoming?

Would not all the souls of men be suffered to go down to the eternal flames of burning sulphur if money was not liberally paid them to prevent such a sad catastrophe?

If there was no paying would there be much preaching and praying?

Can it comport with your sense of justice, honesty, and propriety to see these fat, lazy priests exact and obtain from the hard-working Mickies who carry the hod, and the Bridgets who attend to the roasts and stews in the kitchen, a large share of their hard earnings for the saving of their souls?

Were not many of the old pagan priests and teachers models of virtue and purity compared with your clergymen of modern times?

Do you approve in general of the rich, expensive churches and cathedrals of these times?

Are the \$250,000 churches and \$10,000 and \$20,000 pastors anything like the times when you were upon earth and wandered listlessly about the fields, on the streets of villages and in the country highways?

Would it not be better if these magnificent church places where Mr. Moneybags, Mrs. Grundy, and Mrs. Upper crust meet to worship alike the unknown God and the god of fashion, were all converted into industrial schools, hospitals for indigent widows, imbeciles, helpless cripples, the aged, the infirm, and all unable to do for themselves?

Could not many of them be profitably changed into halls of science, where the truths of nature, the useful arts, and the various vocations of life might be freely taught to all?

In view of the pride, arrogance, extravagance, and hypocrisy of the modern clergy, would it be unsafe to expunge them all as a bad lot?

Would not the hundreds of thousands of priests throughout Christendom, who are entirely an un-producing class, and are living upon the labor and sweat of the toiling classes, be much more profitably employed in useful and productive occupations, thereby earning an honest living?

If the masses who, through ignorance and mistaken notions of virtue and morality, are now induced to support these hordes of pampered, licentious priests, and to build and furnish these costly temples and churches, could be relieved of the onerous expense of all this and if the priests, who labor not at all in the vocations of industry, were forced to do so, would not the hours of toil for the weary and overworked millions be materially lessened, and would there not be more time for rest, recreation, and mental improvement?

Do you like to see the priesthood of all your denominations calling upon their credulous dupes on every occasion for money, money, money, and all for Jesus the Redeemer's sake?

Are not the fashionable churches of the day mere aristocratic associations for an exclusive class, where they can foster pride, arrogance, and self-righteousness?

Are your moral maxims, your simple injunctions, and the lowly sentiments you inculcated upon earth, their guide and rule, or do they follow the fashions of the world, the vanities, the frivolities and gewgawry of dress, jewelry, fine silks, and grand display?

Are members of the churches really any better than the average of non-professing people?

Will the mouthing of your sayings, the calling upon your name, the mere profession of devotion to your cause, avail them without doing the work you prescribed?

If a rich man cannot by any possibility enter the kingdom of heaven, what is to become of large numbers of those calling themselves Christians?

Are not the people of pagan and heathen countries to-day more honest, more sincere, more simple-hearted, less designing, less hyp-

ocritical, less oppressive, less haughty and proud than a large portion of Christian professors?

Among all the nations of the earth, is there one nation where there is more stealing, more lying, more cheating, more fraud, more oppression upon the poor, and more cruelty, more heartlessness, and more murder than in Christian lands?

Are not the precepts, maxims, and moral sentiments you enjoined used by your professed followers more as a cloak for their heartless deception and their self-righteousness, and as a weapon in their controversies with themselves and their antagonists, than as a rule of life or the governing principle of conduct?

Does not the worship of gold, of avarice, of power of fashion, of respectability, of selfishness, control their actions and inspire their lives far more than the meek and lowly doctrines you enunciated?

In a few words, is not Christianity, as known and practiced in the world, a cheat, a fraud, a costly and an expensive luxury which mankind could well spare, losing nothing by its rejection?

Finally, as you now view the field, the past, the present, and the future, would it not, in your opinion, be better to wipe out from the face of the earth all priestcraft, superstition, sectarianism, falsehood, all the absurdities and monstrosities which have so preyed upon mankind, and to inaugurate an era of truth, reason, common sense, science, education, simplicity, fraternity, and humanity; discarding false gods, base devils, useless saviors, and degrading creeds. and to devote our time and attention to the improvement of this world and to the happiness of the human race?

Pardon me, Dear Sir, if I have been importunate or bold in my interrogatories. I feel that it is perfectly safe to inquire of you on all the subjects here touched upon, and upon which I wish information.

Should I be successful in obtaining answers from you, I will be encouraged to ask for more information. But as hinted at in the beginning of my letter, judging from the success I formerly met with, years ago, in the appeals I made to you in thousands of instances, I am prepared to not be disappointed if I receive no reply to this. I am respect fully, duteously, and hopefully,

A TRUTH SEEKER.



G. Vincent Runyon

Mr. Runyon was a Methodist Minister until his research and reason lead him to believe that church teachings were based not on truths or the interests of the flocks but on power, control and self-preservation of the church itself.

He became an outspoken adversary of all organized religions for the remainder of his life.

This book was first published by James Hervey Johnson (Superior Books) in 1959.



Why I Left The Ministry and Became an Atheist

by G. Vincent Runyon

Introduction:

This is the true story of a Methodist minister in good standing who of his own free will and accord renounced Christianity and became an atheist. Naturally you want to know what manner of man he was and why he above all people should do such a thing. If you are bubbling over with questions here are a few you might ask: Was he really ordained? How long was he a preacher? What was his education and background? Did he have to quit? Who was he mad at? What was his motive? Profit? Publicity? Who is financing him? How can he be right when so many educated pastors remain in the fold? Since churches do a lot of good why can he not take that into consideration and either compromise or keep his beliefs to himself? Finally is he a communist? This he will deny as his story unfolds.

The answered questions plus many others are all here so read on. Right off the bat he will briefly sketch his early background so that you can better get the picture. He saves a few replies including his denial of communism for the closing innings.

Be not amazed if in the course of this book he peddles his wares for he loves to pitch for what he aptly terms the best of all causes - Secularism and Atheism. He delivers the atheist ball with as much zip and zeal as he previously preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is still a missionary at heart so beware that he does not capture yours. His theme is that belief in god is a grave and terrible superstition harmful to you and detrimental to society.

Take Notice. For variety he uses the following terms interchangeably and synonymously: Atheists, Secularists, Humanists, Freethinkers, Rationalists. Their differences are so slight that the respective groups often join hands and work together. Runyon belongs to them all.

Having laid his foundation in the third person he will now (click) switch his pen to the first person and get going.

Background and Education

My late father George D. Runyon was for many years a successful newspaper publisher, church trustee, church treasurer and prominent citizen of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. His ancestors of French Huguenot stock came to America in 1665. (the Huguenots suffered bloody persecutions during the religious wars of the time). My mother Melvenia Lewis of Welsh descent was a devout Christian and active in good causes. I was first taught to pray at my mother's knee. I commenced going to Sunday School at kindergarten age and attended church regularly with my parents all through my youth. Church going became so much a habit with me that I continued to attend services when away from home. Natural love for her children caused my mother to do what she considered best for them. Therefore she believed she was doing only her duty when she taught that God like a good shepherd constantly watched over each one of us. I recall how she in all sincerity told us that God had prospered father because he was a good Christian man. Now I believed this and never forgot it for he was a good man and seemingly prosperous. I also believed this because I loved my mother and trusted her. I am now ashamed of the fact that as a lad I was so credulous but I suspect I was too young then and too naive to question my elders. My world was a small world. It did not extend beyond the home. So the seeds of supernatural belief that were planted found fertile soil in which to grow. They became so rooted that they were difficult to extricate at a later date when I discovered to my dismay that some of the things I had learned in my childhood were not so. During my youth I do not recall ever rebelling or being bored with the church and its teachings. I loved the church atmosphere, its friendliness and its music. No wonder I wound up a preacher.

In 1917 I was graduated from Fremont Normal College (now Midland College) Nebraska with an A.B. degree. I taught the following fall and winter history and Political Science at the state school for

teachers in Albion, Idaho. That is until I enlisted in World War 1 which was then getting pretty hot. I would not have been eligible for so good a job had not teachers been scarce. A much respected former president of Albion was a graduate of my school and that helped too. The work was most enjoyable but I was aware that would need higher degrees were I to continue teaching at this level after the war. Upon discharge from the army (13th Balloon Co.) had other ideas. Typical of youth, I was in a hurry to make money. Time lost in the service to my country had made me restless. My first job was with the New York Times in classified advertising. After taking a night course I wrote copy for Barron G. Collier, Street Railway Advertising on 42nd street. I received promotions but not fast enough to suit me so I quit for a lesser known concern that paid me more. Religion had made me an introspective type of individual which I think will explain how at a youth religious conference in 1922 I became disgusted with myself and resolved then and there to cease my selfish quest for money and become a minister. Intuitively I felt that had received the call from on high. I wanted to do good, to be more useful and even though I was only 26 I felt that so far I had contributed nothing to the world. After advice from my pastor I matriculated at Drew Theological seminary from which I graduated in 1925. In 1931 I received my master of Arts degree from Drew University where I majored in Sociology. By that time I was full time pastor of the Methodist church in Deposit near Binghamton, N.Y. My thesis for this degree was "The Relation of Poverty to Crime." My research revealed that poverty was not as strong a factor in crime as I anticipated so I was glad to have made the study.

I do not think I had ever been introduced to skepticism until I attended the seminary where the students are wisely taught the heresies of the past. That is the best place to learn them. At private bull sessions in dormitory rooms where everything was discussed it was evident that some of the more advanced students had doubts about the virgin birth, the resurrection and the miracles. But I came out of the seminary with a sound faith in God despite some uncertainties about so-called fundamentals. Thus I became what is popularly known as a modernist preacher rather than a fundamentalist.

How Long a Pastor?

Twelve years in the pulpit. This included my student pastorates. Being young energetic and well trained I advanced rapidly. My first parish was in Elizaville N. Y. It was near Red Hook where I was raised a Master Mason. The oath was taken in good faith as I was then quite orthodox To be a candidate for Masonry you must, among other things declare in whom you put your trust. The term God is not defined so may be interpreted broadly. Some famous Masons of colonial times were actually deists. The deists were not atheists but their god was not the the orthodox Christian God. The deists were the rationalists of that day. If you want to know what one distinguished deists thought about religion read the famous classic "The Age of Reason," by the Revolutionary war patriot Thomas Paine. A paper back edition for students may be obtained for only 50 cents from the Freethinkers of America, 370 West 35th Street, New York 1, New York. Paine was in advance of his time.

My other parishes were Bangall, near Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; Harriman, near Newburgh; Deposit, near Binghamton and finally historic Old 18th Street Church in downtown New York City which was my last appointment. For three years I worked with enthusiasm trying hard to revive this once famous old westside church in Manhattan. It has been said that I was successful in attracting many young people. I talked their language. Youth are important to a movement so the quicker we rationalists find it out the better. At Old 18th Street Church I married and buried many people and I did a lot of calling. Calling on members and prospective members is good salesmanship so I recommend this technique too to my rationalist friends. I took my work seriously. Preaching was fun. There was generally a reporter in the audience. I was not prominent but the New York Times index records a few sermons.

Incidentally my church employed a deaconess who was comparable to an assistant pastor. Florence Armstrong was dedicated to her work. In her quaint garb she went about doing good bringing inspiration, clothes and groceries to the sick and unemployed. The depression hit many people hard. Capitalizing on my journalistic background I published a sizable church paper in all my parishes. After

delivering my Sunday night's sermon it was not unusual for me to sit up all night in my study typing out copy as fast as I could, to meet the printer's deadline.

Was I Sincere?

Was I sincere? No man walked and talked with God more than I. God was my constant companion. However I was not austere or straight laced. Judge for yourself.

Was I Paid to Quit?

Was profit my motive? No one was financing me. Nor was I in the employ of unscrupulous men. Some may innocently think that I had been paid by the devil or his cohorts to leave the ministry in order to confuse everyone.

Naturally I smile when I write this but since a lot of people in the year 1959 still believe that there is a devil I must in kindness recognize the question and deny it.

I want you to know I was doing well in the pulpit. I quit in my prime at the approximate age of 40. I was far enough advanced that I had security. It was in 1934-35 when secular jobs were as scarce as hen's teeth due to the aftermath of the depression. Actually after I quit I had a bad time financially while getting adjusted. I lost my savings through a California promoter and was up against it for food and got pretty hungry. But I stuck to my guns although I could have returned to the ministry back east without question as I was in good standing.

I have never been a professional atheist. That is I have never been in the employ of any of the various freethought humanist or secularist groups existent in our land. True in recent years I have written a few articles for rationalist journals but this was done as a labor of love. I accepted no money for my efforts even though I could well have used it. I have earned my bread and butter for almost twenty years as a nursing attendant at a large chronic disease and rehabilitation hospital in Downey, California. I like my work here though the job lacks the prestige I previously enjoyed. However I am sure I do

more good in this modest capacity than I did as a dignified and respected member of the clergy.

Was My Motive Publicity?

I slipped out of the profession without fanfare or dramatics. I have lived in obscurity keeping mum on my atheism for twenty-four years. It will be news to my friends back east. At first I did not want to hurt the churches where I had served nor the feelings of my many devout friends within. The older saints have passed on by now. Publicity? One does not expect favorable publicity or popularity espousing an unpopular cause. It is a lonesome road. Did not Jesus the mystic take that road too? Yes and he warned his disciples that there would be the sorrow of separation of close friends and loved ones to those who followed him. It is the price you have to pay when you are a non-conformist or in the minority. Many have found it out.

What Am I Rebelling Against?

Amateur psychologists will ask what am I rebelling against? My early home life was the best. I was not a problem child. I had a wholesome environment. I was successful as a preacher. I have had my share of frustrations in life just as you have. My reasons for leaving the ministry were intellectual and not emotional. I did not get mad and quit. Nothing like that. In fact I was presented with a substantial purse by my New York congregation when I took my leave.

Why Did I Turn My Back on God?

It would hardly be accurate to say that I turned my back on God or was disobedient to him. My conversion to atheism was as I have said an intellectual matter. Be assured that as long as I believed that a God existed I communed with that God. It was only when I could no longer intellectually believe that there was a God that this communion and fellowship with him ceased. How could I do otherwise? Believe me when I say that it was with reluctance that I let go. You might have advised me to hang on but for me to have done so would have made me an intellectual hypocrite. To pretend is dishonest. I

fully expect some pious reader to malign me by accusing me of quitting the ministry in order to indulge in a life of sin. But this would be unkind and untrue. As far as I know after I gave up my superstitious belief in prayer, and became a rationalist my behavior was better, my attitude toward life and people improved. In short I was a better man. Being on my own, good behavior became voluntary. As a pattern for living I adopted the well known golden rule. Stated positively or negatively it is sound ethics. This formula for living, not original with Jesus, undoubtedly is far older than either Christianity and Judaism. It sums up every commandment that has ever been written. Try it. You can't go wrong.

What Events Lead to My Conversion to Atheism?

First let me outline the events that directed me to atheism.

1. I had been taught to be a truthseeker.
2. I took a sabbatical leave which gave me time to travel, study and rethink.
3. I came in contact with the humanists who had a substitute for religion. Worshipping neither God, man nor beast their emphasis was on improving this world rather than preparing for the next.
4. Impressed with the fact that the rationalists, humanist, secularists and freethinkers were superior people I was driven to my books in order to learn whether or not the supposed existence of God was a fallacy. With a hundred questions on my mind I did not stop reading until I was completely and fully convinced that my most fundamental beliefs were based on error. I finally had to conclude that future civilizations would be better off without belief in this nefarious practice of superstitiously attempting to contact the so-called unseen or invisible powers. I quit belief in ghosts.

Let me amplify the four steps one by one:

Step 1. Good professors made me a truthseeker. The motto of my old alma mater Fremont College was "The Light of Truth Leads." From her able scholars I early learned what a thrill, what excitement and what adventure there is in store for those who diligently seek the light of knowledge. Later when commencing my studies at Drew

Theological seminary my beloved and esteemed professor of theology Dr. Edwin Lewis startled the class when he in effect said (my words) "Young men follow truth wherever it leads. It may lead you in dangerous paths but have courage to follow it even if it takes you from your goal." Those were jewelled words of wisdom. Little did I then realize that in later years the continued pursuit of knowledge would lead me from the very profession for which I was then being trained.

Step #2. A sabbatical leave in 1934-35 gave me time to travel, study and rethink. Like most professional men up to my ears in work and busy with extraneous duties I needed to get away and see things in perspective. I was neglecting my reading. Too many college graduates make this sad mistake. Once they get their sheepskins they stop studying because of work pressure and social duties and club demands. Methodist ministers in particular because they change parishes more frequently, often are guilty of rehashing old sermons over and over. Let me emphasize my next sentence. HAD I NOT TAKEN THIS LEAVE WHEN I DID, I KNOW I WOULD STILL BE PREACHING. I would never have seen the light. I would have been blinded by the trees in the forest. THIS SABBATICAL LEAVE WAS THE TURNING POINT. Therefore I am glad I took it and I hope you will take one too. Not for a month but for a whole year. Ministers and professors are entitled to take one after ten years service. I had been preaching twelve years and would not have taken it then, had I not some private business to take care of. When I left on a tour to the west coast following a needed operation I had every reason to return if I chose, for there was nothing against me in the conference, and, I was on good terms with my bishop the Reverend Francis J. McConnell. I carried this and other letters with me.

RESIDENT BISHOP
The Methodist Episcopal Church
150 Fifth Avenue
New York City
Nov. 3, 1934

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that the Rev. G. Vincent Runyon is a fully ordained minister of the New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He is in good standing with excellent equipment and training---of conscientious and earnest spirit.

Francis J. McConnell
Bishop

Regarding Bishop McConnell. He was considered one of the more scholarly bishops of his day. He was author of "Is God Limited" and other Books.

In the west I observed in many churches, without revealing myself as a minister. Here were some of my reflections. I was appalled at the dry, antiquated "horse and buggy" sermons that the people had to listen to every Sunday. Some discourses were worse than others. During this period of my ministry I classed myself as a theological liberal. I was surprised to find so few. I thought that there were more. Though I was known throughout my ministry as a modernist or a liberal I did believe in a god and had a positive message; make no mistake about it. I may have preached a sort of pantheistic God but This God was existent everywhere and he was always available or accessible for he was universal and omnipresent and dwelled within you as well as without you. I taught the divinity of the inner or real self. I theorized that this was the ungrasped misunderstood message of Jesus. I made it a point to avoid the hackneyed language or nomenclature of most preachers.

Though a Methodist it seems that increasingly during my travels I was beginning to feel more at home in the Unitarian churches. As you know the Unitarians allow elasticity of belief offering considerable freedom of thought to their members. I consider the Unitarian church today as a good stepping stone for skeptics who are on the fence but not quite ready for atheism. It is a good place for those who though dissatisfied with orthodoxy still feel that they must cling to the God theory even if their God is nothing more than an impersonal power or force.

However we secularists are indebted to a forward and advanced group of Unitarians for again reviving the historic Humanist movement that had its birth during the renaissance period of enlightenment when there was a noticeable breaking away from ecclesiastical authority by those engaged in the arts and sciences. These Humanists were sick of the medieval suppression of free thought in literary and scientific writings. They were bored by the dominant note in art and literature of angels, devils and biblical legends. So thanks to the Humanists there was a revival of interest in the long buried pagan classics with their spirit of inquiry a spirit which though long dead must rise again. The contents of the classics written in days of less restraint came as a breath of pure air to a darkened world polluted with piety and superstition.

Among the early Humanists were such names as Thomas More, Erasmus, Lorenzo de Medici, Lorenza Valla, Petrarch and Boccaccio. The humanists were not atheists but they recognized the need for the secularization or humanization of knowledge. Piety was ruining it. In the same manner the more recent Unitarian humanists have attempted to humanize religion and bring it down to earth. I will speak more about the Humanists directly.

Step #3. Curiosity about the Los Angeles Society of Humanists headed in the late thirties by Dr. Lowell H. Coate a former Quaker led to my enlightenment. Because this group left its stamp on me for which I shall always be grateful I will always advocate having more such meetings and forums organized throughout the country to educate the traveling public.

These humanists at first shocked me. They sounded sacrilegious just as this very book may sound to the uninitiated. Up until this time I had never considered atheism and did not know that the humanists went that far. It was like a bang on the head. No wonder they woke me up. They made me mad. Who wouldn't be? I was being robbed. No they were not pickpockets. They were not taking anything of intrinsic value. It was worse than that. They were stealing my long cherished precious beliefs that were priceless. On top of that they were filching my security. Visualize for a moment this Sunday gathering of men and women of varied occupations. None of their jobs

were affected by their radical religious beliefs. They had nothing to lose in embracing agnosticism or atheism. But I did for my occupation was that of a clergyman. That was my bread and butter. If I should be foolish enough to go for their line I would have to sacrifice my profession. It would cost me plenty to kiss my years of specialized education and experience good-bye. Furthermore I thought this mixed group of humanists and freethinkers to be absolutely stupid to turn to atheism just because they held doubts about the miracles of Jesus as well as the Old Testament legends. Wasn't I a bit of a heretic myself? Wasn't I too a skeptic? Had not my school taught me that skepticism was normal and yet left me with a strong faith in god?

But nevertheless these secularists got under my skin. They stirred me up. As time went on I came to admire their cultured scientific approach to knowledge. I liked their aims and was impressed with their deportment. A novice might expect them to be irresponsible but they were not. They had high ideals. There are many roads to atheism but I came in through the door of Humanism. My fellow rationalists let us open wide the doors so that others may enter.

Before long the humanist emphasis on man and the problems of this world, rather than the golden streets in the next, appealed to me strongly. I was particularly impressed with the volumes of published sermons of Dr. John H. Dietrich of Minneapolis and the writings of William Lloyd of New York. Lloyd's "Evolutionary Philosophy - A Substitute for Religion" was a honey. After reading him I, not yet an atheist, but certainly an agnostic, wanted to found a godless church or religion. This I figured I could do because of my institutional background but I did not do it because I lacked the financial backing. I figured that such a church with weekly lectures would provide a temporary or transitory home for the thousands of skeptical people including many agnostics who had not yet been weaned from the habit of church going, and, who therefore might welcome a constructive weekly service and training school for youth guidance. It would be a humanist church. There would be no worship.

Today if I am correctly informed the more advanced humanists for semantic reasons frown on the use of such words as church and religion in connection with their program due to the confusion that results from the traditional meanings of these terms. Lancelot

Hogben in his book "Dangerous thoughts," alludes to the modern emphasis of scientific Humanism. Oliver Reiser and Corliss Lamont, professors of philosophy in eastern universities may be said to be exponents of scientific Humanism.

Even though I noted atheists attending Dr. Coate's humanist meetings I was later to discover that the Humanist pattern of approach was more that of the agnostic. In fact many in the group prefer to soft-peddle their atheism so that people of all degrees of skepticism can feel at home. What the proper local approach should be has always been controversial. People of all degrees of skepticism certainly should be made welcome in all freethought groups. People have to crawl before they can walk. We should be patient with those who have not yet arrived. Some have had more time to read than others.

The humanist emphasis has always been on man rather than on god. Man is the unit. He is the measuring stick. As Protagoras said "Man is the measure of all things." Man having developed and coordinated his brain and hands has evolved into the highest form of life yet known. He is at the top of the ladder. His potential is high. He is still creating and like a flower will continue to unfold.

The chief goal of the humanists seems to be the improvement of society by man, instead of God, in the elimination of wars, poverty, disease and other social evils. Because of this emphasis the humanists are fertile soil for every "do-gooder" or propagandist who seeks an audience for his pet reform. You will find a few "cracked pots," just as you do within every other movement including the Christian religion, but by and large you will find that the humanist groups around the world are composed of well read and cultured people. The groups in college towns are on a high level. It is important that the local units be united and strong but unfortunately divisions do occur which always saddens me. It happens when a particular leader or member with a complex for his pet reform, peeve, or hobby, takes over and dominates the meetings, with the real goal of the society lost. Hence good leadership is essential.

Humanists and Atheists Drove Me to My Books

Step #4. I came to know personally many fine atheists and free-thinkers. I mixed with them all. To my surprise these so-called infidels proved to be of as high character as my friends the Christians. In fact I gained so much confidence in their earnest thirst for knowledge, and their intellectual honesty which spilled over into their conduct, that I thought to myself many times that were I an employer hiring help I would choose or trust an atheist above a Christian. That was saying a lot.

Driven to further search for knowledge, I became a passionate reader. Before I was through I read hundreds of volumes. But, mark you, I refused to be swayed by my new friends without considerable study. I knew that I could not afford to be wrong so I kept feverishly searching for the answers to innumerable questions that flashed to - my mind. These questions had to be answered to my satisfaction before I would budge an inch. The field covered history of religion, origin of religious beliefs, comparative religions, philosophy, religious psychology and books on various branches of science. I tell you I was a hard nut to crack. It was a once in a lifetime decision for me. Tougher for me than for most people. Here I was by profession an ordained clergyman with much at stake. My security and my pride for one thing. It is not always easy to face the truth when you have something at stake. It takes courage. It is like jumping off a cliff or buying something costly. There is the temptation to ignore new truth, to run away from it all, or, to thrust one's head in the sand so as to blind one's eyes, or deafen one's ears or close one's mind to the facts.

What do you suppose haunted me most during this period of research? It was how could my lovable, esteemed and scholarly old professors at Drew be wrong? This bothered me no end. Later I did rationalize, as one must do, that they could be wrong, and why couldn't they? Like the rest of us they too had been moulded from their youth up by this much glorified and publicly accepted institution of society, namely the church. It was a part of the status quo. True these professors were rated as experts or specialists in various categories of religion yet no doubt had become too busy with routine

classes and other chores to question or rethink their own beliefs. Furthermore it was their bread and butter and most of them were married. They were not one whit different than many pastors like myself who had become so busy with our multitudinous duties that the days, months and years rolled by without us ever taking time out to reappraise the beliefs we had been taught. These professors sit comfortably in endowed chairs and they must not violate them. Like Humpty Dumpty they have been elevated to a higher pedestal than most of us so they must be careful what they say. They have further to fall. They must not hurt themselves nor the institutions in which they teach.

I Renounce Religion

Finally I was forced to conclude that the alleged existence of god is but a myth, born of fear. That all gods including the Christian god are but figments of the imagination or outright inventions of the mind. I reasoned that the environment of primitive man which lacked a scientific explanation of nature's torments had every reason to be permeated with superstition but that we with our advanced scientific knowledge have no reason to appease imaginary gods. As I continued boring into my books the searchlight of knowledge was thrown upon my long cherished beliefs. I saw them for what they were worth. Reluctantly I shed them one by one. I did not label myself right away. I hardly knew what label to use. At first I called myself a Humanist. Sometimes an agnostic. Sometimes a Rationalist. Sometimes a Secularist. After many years of study and thought and assimilation I prefer a term that states my position clearly and positively. That is why I today declare myself an atheist. I evolved into an atheist not because I wanted to but because the evidence in all my books overwhelmingly pointed to a materialistic universe and against the plausible existence of supernatural beings or gods of any description.

The Most Important Day of My Life

I shall always remember the day when I decided that I could no longer have the right to call myself a Christian I shall never forget that exciting though sad moment when in the quiet of my study I first

realized this. I am certain my pulse beat was faster. I had not been pushed. I chose my course.

My emotions were mixed. I was happy because of the release that came with the decision. I had found the rainbow. I was elated. I was as happy as a man who had found a jewel of great price. I knew of course, that that which I had lost was being replaced by something better. I felt free as a bird. I was now my own master. No longer a mental slave. The eyes of a dictatorial god were no longer upon me nor upon my fellow men. And that indeed was good. Good because it at once made me aware that I had a greater obligation to all living creatures since there was no longer a god to guard or protect anyone. Hence a natural brotherhood arose within me toward all men. I would like to see the day come to pass when all men will shake off their supernatural beliefs and recognize this natural brotherhood of which I speak. But despite my enthusiasm I fear that that day is a long ways off because religion is so entrenched in our society that it will be around for a long time. Even astrology a discarded science that once was held in high respect, is still with us.

As I said above my emotions were mixed. I was overjoyed to have found truth. But there was reason for sadness and disgust. What about my wasted years? The best years of my life were gone. They were spent in vain. My career was shattered. I spent years in training for a profession for which I had now lost respect and could no longer with conscience follow. Here I was in possession of professional experience so useless and impractical that it would ruin me for future employment. I had to change horses in midstream. This was before World War II when the country had not yet emerged from the effects of the depression. With jobs scarce there would be difficulty seeking work in a new field. Thinking it over it finally dawned on me that I was a victim of circumstances. I had been made a fool of. I had been gulled. I had been sold down the river. I had been sold a bill of goods to train for the ministry and all of a sudden bingo that training and twelve years of experience had to go down the drain. Who could I blame? I could only blame society for tolerating and legalizing through the centuries this great swindle upon the public. Why mince words? You people in the pews, you have contributed money lavishly week after week and expended so much time and effort you are

the real victims. Though I had worked like a beaver for the church and had given my all, just look at the harm I did to people like yourselves. That is the sad thing. I preached fairy tales and legends as gospel truth. I told of a god. I magnified him. I built him up. I exaggerated him. I acted as his representative. I pictured him as a Santa Claus who could be easily contacted by merely muttering the hocus pocus of magic words. This act of magic was given a respectable name called prayer. Prayer is a one way conversation with the invisible world.

We poor mortals because of our ignorance and inexperience make many mistakes. The saddest mistake I ever made in my immature years was when I fell for this divine buncombe. It is not to my credit that I went so far as to make it my business or profession. The fact that I was sincere does not excuse me. Look at the mental damage caused.

By way of illustration I bred wishful thinkers when I urged my troubled parishioners to pray. All who hoped for an answer were wishfully thinking and waiting I daresay some are still waiting and wondering why their prayers are still unanswered. It would help them if now they could know the stark truth that there was no god all the time and that I their pastor was then too dumb to know it. When I taught those people to lean heavily on God's everlasting arms, I was unwittingly teaching them to be parasites and procrastinators. I was teaching them to stand still and dream day dreams. You have heard the old saying "Let George Do It." I taught these people to let George (god) do things for them. No wonder young people thus brought up get nowhere fast.

Ministers and Priests are Quacks

The seminary educated me to be a quack. What is a quack? A quack in short is one who pretends to have an inside wire or track. No priest, rabbi, minister or bishop or cardinal or pope has inside knowledge about heaven, hell and god but to hear me exhort you would have thought that I had influence with God. That is how all ministers sound when they pray (bray) with that old paranoic voice of divine authority, which so many clergymen quickly develop, while

thundering and reechoing their god's fiendish and diabolical warnings of future punishment. Pause and listen some Sunday to these circus freaks peddling their wares over the radio and please notice at the same time how subtly yet how brazenly they beg for gold to carry on their quackery. Listen to the tent revivalists who are the high pressure artists of the world's greatest and cruelest racket. These pious swindlers prey on the aged, the widows, the poor and the sick. They deserve your censure. They should not be allowed to operate. If they were selling anything else but religion the police would be after them in a hurry. But our laws have made this racket legal.

Dealing with distant and unknown and invisible powers has been a profitable field for fakers and racketeers from time immemorial, and I am sorry to say that rabbis, priests and ministers must be included in this category. Every-one of them are quacks. You heard me correctly. The man in the pulpit who makes you think he is publicly praying to god is a quack. The man who comes to your home and offers to pray (or beg) to a god for a cure of anyone's soul or body is a quack. He may not know it but he is. When the priest does his mumbo jumbo for fee or salary he is indulging in quackery. No, I will not exempt the protestant clergymen. Of course most of them are sincere just as many quacks of medicine are when they try to sell you their pet remedies. Do not be taken in. Do not be fooled by the clergymens' neatly tailored black clothes and their cultured manners. It is all window dressing. Beware of these wolves (some of them are wolves) in sheep's clothing. Have you ever noticed that the women far outnumber the men in every church service? It is not hard to know why. But I am not going to stick my neck out and say. I will let you think that out for yourself. I only know that many men who do go to church are dragged there. A few are henpecked. These male wolves in their black frocks go after the rich as well as the poor bleeding them of large amounts of their financial blood. As for the widows they love to be fleeced and buncoed by their good looking pastors. Why should they mind writing out those fat checks for the church? They figure they will receive a mansion in the sky in return. These rich communicants may not know it but they are very unbusinesslike. They are buying a pig in a poke, buying blindly, as the eastern suckers used to do when they bought distant Florida real estate

by mail, only to find out later that they had bought worthless swamp land. These rich contributors eventually will die without ever a deed for their heavenly real estate which they bought sight unseen, and which actually does not exist. After death it will be too late for the deceased to come back to get even with their fast talking pastors, who by then will have moved on to other cities to reap additional harvests.

Newspapers and magazines, TV and radio give these pious swindlers and sellers of heavenly property free space and time to publish their gibberish and double talk. Local governments unconstitutionally subsidize the churches by exempting them from taxes. This should be stopped. Churches be it known are our largest landowners. That is one reason why your taxes are so high. They pay no taxes and the remaining taxpayers such as you and I have to make it up for the expenses of government are enormous. Politicians are no help for they bow and scrape before the clergy as though these hypocritical Salvationists were better than ordinary men. We put these glorified parasitical quacks who enjoy begging for a living on a pedestal. Yet they are on a level with fortune tellers and similar racketeers. Fortune tellers bad as they are do less harm because their racket is not so well organized nor are their teachings systematized to church proportions. The fortune tellers lack press agents to build up good will for them and to glorify their magic powers, and particularly the invisible supernatural powers, from whom they draw their secrets. These crystal gazers like the clergy are peddling mystical nonsense and false information. Both are pretenders of knowledge and both deal with the realm of the unseen and invisible. Did you know that fortune tellers in Los Angeles now operate under the cloak of religion in order to operate legally? They use the title Reverend before their names. Quite fitting isn't it?

Are the Clergy Better Educated?

Did I hear you say that the clergy are well educated and therefore not in the same category with the fortune tellers and other quacks who claim to do business with the super natural powers? Ah yes there is the rub. Your pastor has been to school true, but he has never been taught to think. He is a parrot. Forgive him. He can't think

for himself. His thinking has been warped because he has been indoctrinated with religious superstition. His education has been slanted. He has been told what to believe. It has been poured into him through a funnel. When he is graduated he is a beautiful bird who wears a colorful robe on Sundays and repeats the same lingo week

Actually the educational level of the average clergyman has always been low though slightly higher than the people in the pews. There are of course exceptions. His little education formerly never mattered as long as the people in the pews were ignorant but it matters now because church members today are getting higher education and they can be greatly bored by a 2x4 preacher who does not know what he is talking about. Some denominations have higher standards than others, but mark you, thousands of ministers have had no college education, but to take non-accredited home study courses of required reading, designed to make them full fledged shouting robots. Some of these non-schooled clergymen when not too lazy to stick their noses in books do pick up a degree of culture and if they possess either literary or oratorical ability are able to put on a good show. Ministers of the literary type produce some brilliant essays. These essays if stripped of meaningless pious phrases would be worth listening to. Many of these men are creative and original. It is too bad they are confined to a mental cage. They should be on the lecture platform speaking their wisdom secularly. In my humble opinion all the good that is done in the name of religion could be done just as well if not better secularly. For diversion I attend the movies once a week. I have perhaps learned more good moral lessons from selected movies than from any other source in life. You do not need to go to church if you are a sincere seeker after that which is good. You can find it in books, in plays, in forums, in lectures, in night schools, in art galleries and music academies. You can waste your time in church. On Sundays both radio and television offer their best educational programs. Relax and listen to them. Improve yourself. The people in the pews are often fooled by the gift of gab of their pseudo-educated pastors who are nothing but ventriloquists' dummies speaking their pieces. Some of the pulpiteers in the nicer sections of the city dispense discourses that are polished with a little more veneer than the emotional sermons of the shouting ranting re-

vivalists more often found in the poorer sections of town. This is how many people are fooled. The better class of trade must be taken care of.

What About Revelation?

Revelations are a dime a dozen. The further back in time you go the more apt you are to hear of them. Today the more superstitious you are the more apt you are to fall for them. Consider what sort of people among your acquaintances are most superstitious. Are they informed?

My research or adventure into books has taught me that these strange people who claim to have visions, dreams or hallucinations of the unseen world, past, present or future or who have revelations about god are either mentally sick or are deliberate fakers. The uninformed credulously believe these people. You should take the time to study this field but if you do not, at least verify or confirm what I have written, by questioning an expert or authority in the field of medical psychiatry.

The trouble with most people is that they do not orient themselves to new knowledge. Their fault is that they do not assimilate all that they have read or have been taught. They pigeon hole their findings when these findings conflict with their Bible even though that antiquated reference book is too ancient to be factually authoritative. Most books on library shelves are out of date after tell years.

A comprehension of evolution should make an atheist or agnostic out of anyone. It is over a century since Darwin published his "Origin of Species." Even though biological research geological research and astronomical research has advanced considerably since then, with further confirmation of evolution yet many stupid preachers mostly the unschooled ones are poisoning the minds of their hearers by prejudicing them against the acceptance of the evolutionary theory. Using the language of piety their narrow-mindedness is a sin. This is an example of one of the many ways religion has long been a stumbling block to progress.

Why Not Compromise?

Some well meaning people suggest that I compromise. They say if I do not like the austere monarch type of God that I join a sect that subscribes to an impersonal type of god. In that way they smilingly infer that one can maintain respectability and our neighbors won't be lifting their eyebrows. In reply to that let me say first of all that this impersonal (not a person) type of god is just as impotent useless and ineffective in prayer. as all the other gods who have ever been invented and dispensed by the dishonest money-mad hucksters of occult merchandise. My advice is to stop looking or shopping around to see who has the best god. None of them will function.

Incidentally why is a creator necessary? Is it not more difficult to account for a creator than it is to account for the earth's existence? The necessity of a creator or god is a delusion. True the world is marvelous and interesting. Yet nature though sometimes beautiful is also ugly and violent. Man has had to learn to conquer it for it so often has destroyed him. In primitive times man seared stiff personalized nature and tried to appease it with gifts and sacrifices. That's how the god idea got started and also how priest-craft got started. What an opportunity for a profitable racket!

So many people refuse to let go of the idea instilled in them during childhood that the earth and everything in it is fabricated by the hand of god. Many today hang on to this childish notion for appearance sake. They lack the courage to let go. This indicates what a superstitious hold the god idea has on them. The very word itself should be shelved with such words as witches, ghosts, fortune tellers, astrologers, etc. Rid your mind of supernatural beliefs and your brain will function more clearly. The mind that is cluttered with the cobwebs of religious superstition is incapable of logical thinking.

Someone is going to ask me what makes the universe tick? What keeps it alive? I may not know much but I would be a fool after having been to elementary school, high school and college to not go along with the scientists who recognize the evolution of the stars as well as the evolution of biological life. I am quite aware that there has to be a fundamental basic material (perhaps chemical) in nature to account for the genesis of things. Energy or chemical whatever it is, it

is potent and it sustains us. Scientists reportedly are on the track of it. When discovered this knowledge like all scientific knowledge will be significantly useful. As soon as it is announced by the researchers I predict that like vultures the clergy will pounce upon this materialistic secret of nature and will call it god. In desperation they will reach for a straw. The preachers will take this information, twist it around, tie it into knots and befuddle peoples' minds so that everyone will be thinking crazy just as they have a lot of credulous superstitious people doing now.

The crux of what I am trying to say is that scientific knowledge too often is not treated with respect by the religious element. The theologians warp it and twist it out of shape and put words in the scientists' mouths. There are a lot of ignorant folks who have more respect for what their pastors dig out of their half baked craniums than what the scientists have dug up with hard work and years of research. Pastors dilute, adulterate and prostitute scientific knowledge by the way they interpret it. Nowadays many of them will tell you that they believe in evolution but with a large BUT. They say BUT god stepped into the evolutionary process when the humans came along and gave man a soul. Just like that. But there is no evidence. Scientists know of no soul. The word soul is a religious invention. These glib talking pastors who pretend to know it all, hand out a lot of other pseudo scientific balderdash, with the result that many people are misinformed. So much so, that when they find themselves in the company of educated people, they are incompetent to discuss things that every school child should know. Folks who stubbornly hang on to an impersonal god, are only wasting their time and injuring their intellects. They are punch drunk from listening to theological claptrap. Life would be a lot simpler and a lot more understandable for these hesitant people if they would intellectually go all the way instead of half way and have the courage to reject once and for all their long held superstitious beliefs in a supernatural power.

Religion by Mail

What about the mail order religions? You have seen their cleverly written ads of pretended hidden secret knowledge which strangely no

one else is aware of but them, not even the scholars. The ads may sound convincing but it is the same old indigestible "hash." With their free will offerings pouring in by mail, these racketeers make money hand over fist, just as the professional evangelists do. Instead of selling you orthodoxy they offer you garbled pseudo-psychology mixed with religion and designed to build up your ego. But do not waste your money on their books and courses. There are plenty of expertly written psychology books on success and how to make money, saleable in good book stores, that would be more useful and practical. Do not get involved. Do not let these mail order hucksters get their dirty hands on you.

Among the best sellers today are occasional books on success and happiness written by big name Protestant ministers, Catholic priests or Jewish rabbis. These fellows are merely opportunists out to make a fast dollar. These bartenders of religious concoctions like the religious mail order people mix and dispense a smattering of psychology with a large glass of religious bitters. It is supposed to tonic you. It should make every credulous person immediately success happy, and, eventually drunk with his own success. Bosh!

Psychology is a useful and fascinating study but why learn it from quacks. My advice is to take your psychology straight and not with a religious chaser. These pastors are not expert psychologists. It is not their field. You can buy any number of equally interesting psychology books written by experts in medical psychology which would be more informative, and more reliable. Do not clutter your brain with junk. A safe rule to follow in reading is to avoid books that tend to adulterate scientific information with religion.

Knowledge is Like a Sword

Knowledge like a sword conquers and destroys all error and truth. If you hitherto have been forbidden by your priest, on penalty of hell, to read certain exciting books that should free or liberate you, I am sorry for you. You are not only missing the time of your life but you are losing something worth while.

No wonder the Catholic church jealous of its position and power, forbids its members to read books listed in its censored index. The

church is engaged in big business. No wonder it puts pressure on bookstores and librarians who display books that they fear will undermine the beliefs of its members. Better read this booklet fast before it is put on the index and buy extra copies to mail to your loved ones. Here is what reading did for me. It revealed that everyone of my precious beliefs had been outmoded by some branch of science. I no longer believe in heaven and hell nor angels and devils, the creation fable, the flatness of the earth, the sun standing still, the serpent that talked, the axe that swam, the legend of the virgin birth. and other Biblical miracles, myths, and legends. All are utter nonsense.

Was the Bible Inspired by God?

When your grandfather went to church he was told by his preacher that the entire Bible, word for word, was written by the finger of God. When your father went to church he was told that if the Bible was not written by God then it must have been inspired by him. That is what I was taught in theological seminary. But it is not so. All writers receive flashes of inspiration. That is where the fun comes in writing. The science fiction boys who invent the most amazing incidents which they dig from their imaginations are inspired like the rest of us. This writer was inspired when he composed this manuscript. But inspiration is a natural phenomena. It is deception to claim that it is of God. The bible contains a number of filthy passages, passages that would put "Lady Chatterley's Lover" to shame which I mention only because this novel was recently banned from the U.S. mails. Many Christians swear that the Bible is God's word. If there is a god this claim is an insult to that god. This antiquated book several thousand years old, is so outmoded that it is not only unreliable for its teachings of science but also for much of its ethical and sociological teachings. Yes there are some truisms in the Bible as there would be in any old book of collected writings but the bulk of its contents are worthless except as a psychological study of the many childish beliefs held by the masses in those days before the advancement of science and universal education. The people of old time were gullible with no reading matter available. Tales were magnified and whispered one to another. The Bible is a hook of many errors and contradictions and

no one knows this better than the religious scholars. This is not the mere opinion of an atheist. It is the opinion of experts. The Christian Bible is not the only bible that had its characters do miracles. It was the literary custom for centuries. Kings as well as gods were magnified. It was a fashionable custom in pre-Christian days for kings who wanted to gain favor in the eyes of the subjects to have their biographers give them a "Hollywood build-up" and boast of their miracles. In ancient times a traveler wanting an audience in a city had a few magic tricks or miracles which he could perform to gain a crowd. When you know these things and how the public even to this day loves to be mystified you can better understand some of the fabulous stories in the bible. Our mass education today is only mediocre and that is why even in this modern age people are credulous enough to swallow the most incredible claims of the hundreds of existing cults each of which is trying to outdo its competitors with the tallest story.

What Harm has the Bible Done?

Because you can prove pro or con just about everything with the Bible it has frequently led men astray and brought them to disaster. It has been dynamite in the hands of the insane. So many of the mentally ill have religious complexes. Newspapers frequently report murders that are either God inspired or Bible inspired. Misled humans have tried to help God punish. This reached mass proportions during the middle ages in the terrible persecutions of heretics and non-believers. The Bible was useful to slavemasters when they quoted from it: "Slaves (servants) obey your masters." Ephesians 6:5. How to thrust an identification hole through the ears of slaves was explained in Exodus 21:6. The Bible was useful to witchcraft when it was quoted "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Exodus 22:18. Thousands of innocent people were accused of witchcraft and quickly killed. Non-believers like myself would have been tried as witches. Entire books have been written to illustrate the harm done by Bible texts.

All through history the church jealous of her wealth and power has tried to muzzle the scientists because their discoveries came in conflict with the teachings of the Bible or the church. These learned

men had to either recant which they often did in order to survive or else suffer death or in some cases be excommunicated in disgrace. To be excommunicated was tantamount to bankruptcy for one ostracized in the middle ages was unemployable and could die of starvation. Even today it is the church's most powerful weapon. The above should explain how the church contributed to the darkness (ignorance, sickness and squalor) of the dark ages. It should also explain why Christianity with all its evils has survived. It carried on not because the Christian religion had God's blessing. It survived because all the people were forced to subscribe to it or suffer the brutal punishments just mentioned.

The church had more power in those days. Church and state were one. The earthly kings ruled by divine right or by the pretended authority of God. The multitudes swallowing this fiction would grovel in the dust and touch the garments of their kings in oriental fashion expecting miracles. The pope is such a king in the eyes of his communicants. Today even in our enlightened country, Christians believe that the prayers of their priests and pastors are more apt to be heard because they received their pastoral orders by the laying on of hands or by divine right. Here is an example of one of the many superstitions that religion fosters. The public is told that these so-called men of god are middle men or mediators between the ordinary folks and the throne of god. All this makes for superstition and wishful thinking and the temptation to hoodwink and get money from the credulous masses. Where church and state are entwined people are forced by the government to believe these things. Be thankful that in America we have separation of church and state.

One thing that has helped the United States since its birth is the freedom it acquired by the separation of church and state. Thanks to our forefathers it is the law of our land. In colonial times men like Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, Washington, Madison and Paine were closer to the European scene than we who try to interpret history today. They knew the dangers that a new nation would face. Such men tried to prevent here the recurrence of such events as religious wars and persecutions which had strangled the countries of Europe for hundreds of years. Freedom of thought did not prevail abroad. Heretics were imprisoned. Jews were called murderers of Christ and

were branded and had to live in ghettos on the outskirts of European cities. It is no accident that we in the U.S.A. have separation of church and state. It is to protect us from religious dictatorship. Our nation's founders insisted that what happened in Europe must not happen here.

Unfortunately many of our modern legislators do not know their history for many illegal bills have been introduced recently that favor religion in general or some church in particular. If we do not do something about this we are headed for a theocracy which is a combined secular and ecclesiastical dictatorship. If this occurs it will mean that the church in power will rule with an iron hand. Other churches will not have a chance. We will be back in the dark ages again and history will repeat itself. Do not think it can't happen here. If separation of church and state is such a good thing for our country then separation of church and business, of church and radio, of church and the press should likewise be good for all concerned. I say beware of the grasping begging hands of the priests who ask for favors.

If the Churches do Good Why Not Leave Them Alone?

On the assumption that churches do good some well meaning friends suggest that I "soft pedal" my radical religious beliefs. I say that the little good that is accomplished is outweighed by the harm. The minds of little children are being contaminated by religion's superficial unrealistic philosophy. What injures the children of today injures the world of tomorrow.

Of course the church does some good. Its charitable enterprises are commendable. It would be a pity if an institution so long established had nothing to show for its efforts. In organization there is strength. So by virtue of its organization the church cannot help but do some good. Tammany hall in its heyday even when it was under attack for its corruption did a lot of commendable charity work among New York's poor. Doing good has often been a front for individuals and groups. Gambling on the race tracks and lotteries in foreign countries are often condoned due to the huge contributions to charities by these groups.

If the church's foundation is unsound and based on error are we going to perpetuate its harmful superstitions just because the institution does useful charitable work?

Let us hope that the world of tomorrow will not need these charities but if by then science has not yet made community charity obsolete, some secular organization or agency will certainly take over and do a better job. Rest assured that the good in religion will never die. "Only the bad will be interred with its bones." (I apologize Mr. Shakespeare). The world of tomorrow will hold on to that which is good. Religion despite its stake in a fallacy has made its contributions to society so history will be kind to it. Of that I am certain. The supposed good that it accomplishes in the field of morals and behavior will be treated next.

The Problem of Behavior

Having formerly been both a clergyman and a teacher it is only natural that I consider the topic of morals and behavior highly important. Improved individual behavior means improved national and international behavior. What then is the medium outside the home best equipped to improve individual human behavior? Is it the church? Many people think so. Many adults who themselves never attend services, financially support the church because they have been told that the church is the only place they can send their children to learn to be good.

Years ago I was of the rash opinion that once all the peoples of the earth were converted to Jesus Christ world peace would prevail. This dream was an impetus to my preaching. If the idea was only sound or true it would be one of the best arguments for supporting world wide missions. But it is not true and I am sorry to report that I no longer subscribe to that point of view. Today it is my firm opinion that the whole batch of religions with their aims and claims are a barrier to world peace. Religion does not unite people. It divides them. Religion is not only a barrier to world peace but a thwarter and a stumbling block to world progress.

Imparting the knowledge of how to behave is a teaching problem that requires the best of techniques. Who is best able to do this? For

ages society has solely turned this important job over to the church. It got started in the middle ages when the church and state were united. But you know as well as I do that the church has not and can not do the job well for two reasons. 1. It is not equipped for the task. 2. It does not reach enough people. The basic teaching of the church school is so inferior, so out of date, so childish that academically and pedagogically it is unfit to function. Yet we insist on supporting it. Is it not high time that something be done about it? In our country where we have strict separation of church and state there is no logical reason whatsoever to assign to the church this responsibility. It is a hangover from the old world.

What is the technique of the church? The church teaches behavior by the old fashioned method of fear. Children are taught that they are being watched and that they will be rewarded or punished in the hereafter according to their deportment. All this is done by an invisible unseen god. Some churches have tried to improve the emphasis but that is the basic idea. Children are taught of hell and heaven and of devils and angels and miracles. For such teachings there is no basis in fact. It leads to superstition. It makes some children neurotic and warps their personalities. It is an antiquated ineffective technique. The idea of piety is repulsive to normal young minds. Boys do not want to be thought of as angels. It makes them ashamed to be good.

Another reason why the church should not be entrusted with this responsibility is that it is a private institution and it does not reach half the children. It reaches only a small fraction of the population. How can you prevent or cure delinquency that way?

What do I suggest? I recommend that some individual or some agency other than the church take the bull by the horns and enlighten the nation to the necessity of turning over this job of teaching behavior to the public schools where it rightfully belongs. To achieve this will be a long battle. Behavior should be taught secularly because it is a legitimate secular subject. And it should be taught competently as a prescribed course of study. Constitutionally the public schools are not allowed to teach religion but note I do not suggest that the public schools teach religion. Juvenile delinquency is one of our biggest national problems. We can no longer afford to use the horse and buggy methods of the churches to help prevent it. The best is none too

good. The teaching of behavior should be put in the lap of the public schools instead of in the voluntary incompetent hands of an antiquated private institution such as the church which is a hindrance to the cure. The church is in the way in this instance as it has always been in the way in every important reform in history. I ask that behavior when taught be stripped bare of its pious trappings. I ask that the public school authorities teach behavior scientifically to children. I ask that it be taught as an art or skill. When this is done this generation and coming generations will like the subject. They will have respect for it. They will take pride in practicing it as there will be no pious nonsense attached to it. Arts and skills appeal to youth. Teach the kids enthusiastically how to live successfully and happily and how to get along with others. Certainly cheating, stealing, dishonesty and other anti social behavior does not pay. Teach the young boy how to be accepted and approved not by god but by strangers. Leave god out of the picture. Remove piety from the course of study and watch youth change its pattern of living. Watch them go for this subject in a big way.

What about parochial schools? Naturally they will not buy this. They will oppose it bitterly. But it is too bad for Catholic children deserve something better than the old fashioned techniques they are now exposed to. I offer this suggestion as a small contribution toward the big task of curing juvenile delinquency and crime.

The kids who go to Sunday school are not properly taught how to face the frustrations and vicissitudes of life. Instead they are taught that God will look after them. What is wrong with that? I'll tell you what is wrong. Later the smarter ones find out that this is not true. Newspaper headlines of accidents, catastrophes and fires confirm that their god does not look after his own sweet innocent children even when they are on their knees praying for help in the time of disaster. Anyone of intelligence should know that prayers fall on deaf ears. But the trouble is that from their youth people have been conditioned to think otherwise. The reports of answered prayers that you and some cultists cite are but coincidences. Billions of prayers are sent up. Naturally there would be a considerable number of favorable answers without "god" moving a finger because of the law of averages. Most of the worries we bring to god in prayer never mate-

realize as any psychologist will affirm. So there is no need to pray in the first place. So why give prayer credit for stopping what was not going to happen?

Our jails are filled with young men and women who profess belief in god. Each one of them will tell you or confess to the prison chaplain that he believes in god. You will seldom find an atheist or a rationalist there. Before you contradict me make sure you understand what an atheist is and what he is not. Your minister may have incorrectly told you of atheists who have confessed their sins and returned to God. More than likely these men were not formerly atheists at all. For instance a backsliding Christian is not defined as an atheist. He is a Christian even though he is a poor one. A man who ignores or defies his god to do wrong is not an atheist. He is a Christian. An atheist has no god to defy or turn his back on. An atheist is a rationalist and he lives by that code. He is what he is on intellectual grounds. He is an atheist because his study gives him no evidence that there is a god.

In regard to prisons there are statistics to show which church has the highest percentage of inmates per population. I will not embarrass that particular church in this book. Let us cease to frighten people through superstitious beliefs into being good. For the sake of the young people let us find a better way.

Am I a Communist?

It is unfortunate that this question has to be answered. If asked in the right spirit and with good intentions I do not mind. Realizing that many people jump at conclusions when they are not in the know I will not ignore the question even if asked in the spirit of doing me injury. My more intelligent readers are aware by now that the word communist has become a popular smear word, frequently used by the opposition, and aimed ignorantly or maliciously against all reforms and reformers. Please keep that in mind in the future when bigoted critics lambaste my book.

Regardless of the merits or demerits of communism I am happy that I can truthfully say that I am not a communist nor have I ever been one nor have I ever knowingly associated with one. All that I know about them is what I read in the papers. I want no truck with

them. They seem to split up every organization which they infiltrate. I am a rationalist and secularist. I do not want the great cause of atheism to be weakened or adulterated by the injection of communism's economic theories.

But I want to be fair! The philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) in his voluminous writings made a casual statement about religion that I can and do earnestly endorse. He said "Religion. .. is the opium of the people." Looking back on history Marx apparently was cognizant of how religion had acted as a drug on people's minds for over a thousand years. It was this tranquilizer that kept the dark ages dark. Ignorance, squalor and disease prevailed because people's minds stupefied with the fallacies of religion held to the fixed idea that the existing social evils were in accordance with god's will. Therefore they did nothing to remedy social conditions for fear of offending god. Marx no doubt saw how religion had paralyzed and narcotized the minds of people thus retarding and impeding their progress.

Atheism was not original with communism. This is something a lot of unread people do not know. Lest you forget men doubted the existence of god long before Marx, long before modern socialism or communism. In fact atheism existed in ancient times before the Christian era. It is not a new development. Therefore it is not logical to accuse an atheist of being a communist. None of my atheist friends are communists. It seems that the ones that I know best are outright capitalists who buy and sell on the market. Of course I am aware that all of the old time socialists most of whom read a lot are familiar with the evils of religion. Many are atheists I am sure. Most reformers including socialists have found religion in the way. They have claimed it is impotent, pharisaical, and inclined to pass by on the other side of the street, when social courage is required. The pattern of religion has been ultra-conservative. The atheist or freethought movement like any other forward movement draws its members from all ranks of society, so there are bound to be many different philosophic and political views represented in the membership.

Whatever is evil in Russia is not due to her atheism. If there is any good in Russia that is it. Russia's atheism may be the factor that contributes most to her intellectual advance. More so than her economic system for all I know. I wish the people of my native land could grasp

this. I want to be understood. I only hope that I make myself clear when I say that if our free western world is advancing rapidly today it is doing so not because of her religion but in spite of it. In other words the renaissance period of enlightenment with its divorcement from religion which began in the 14th century is still at work and has gathered momentum. Our poor old world is still fumbling and stumbling but slowly and surely freeing itself from the shackles of supernatural beliefs. We have emerged from the dark ages only because we have put religion in the background paying only lip service to it. Our scientists have broken loose from that stranglehold grip which the church held on them throughout the middle ages. In those earlier days the church thwarted all the sciences that interfered with its teachings. Even medical science was stifled when surgical operations were forbidden on grounds that physicians were encroaching on god's territory. Later anesthetics were forbidden because it was thought god wanted people to suffer. It was superstitiously believed that suffering was sent as punishment. Do you not see what I meant when I earlier said that superstitious religious beliefs prevent people from thinking clearly and logically? Do you not see what the philosopher Marx meant when he wrote "Religion is the opium of the people"? Later the church was against painless childbirth for the same reason. The church still opposes birth control. Most of the reforms that have taken place in history have been led by religious skeptics. The church with the passing of time eventually gives in under public pressure but it never takes the lead. Like a dog's tail it is always behind. This little book is too small to tell the whole story against religion but perhaps I have given you an inkling so far as to what I am driving at in my offensive against the ecclesiastical system.

In our antagonism with Russia we have tended to create hate by unfairly injecting the religious issue in addition to the economic and political ones. A few of our syndicated columnists in order to stir up emotionalism against Russia, have used smearingly, such words as atheistic and godless, making something evil out of something good. Similar writings and speeches by diplomats and statesmen only reflect our national ignorance. If we really are sincerely interested in world peace there is something that we will have to do in a hurry. Our leaders, men who sit in high places, including our presidents,

will have to make a new appraisal of our country's unsound attitude on religion and treat atheism with the respect that it deserves. Who knows but what a changed attitude on religion could prevent a war? Religion as an emotional weapon has caused too many wars already. Let us not have another hundred years war. Who knows but what we as a nation could be very right on everything else but wrong on the score of religion? If I did not think so I would not be writing this manuscript. Let me repeat that I am not a communist and I will file suit against the first person that makes that charge.

A Word to My Brethren in the Ministry

I love everyone of you. I have pleasant memories of past fellowship with you and I hope we can always meet on a friendly personal basis even though we may not see eye to eye on the subject matter of this book. I have been rough with you. I have called you quacks, racketeers and swindlers. Individually you are not that but collectively you are. You do not mean to be because the majority of you are sincere just as I was. Brethren you will have to admit to yourselves that most of the professional independent roving evangelists are in this category. A few of them have gotten so filthy rich they have started world churches of their own in order to better feather their nests.

What I have been saying so far is that there is no evidence factual or otherwise that a god exists. A claim based on revelation is not convincing. Myths and legends are not reliable. There is no scientific evidence that a god exists and philosophers for centuries have just about beaten their brains out trying to prove there is a god and they have failed. Therefore any endeavor on the part of the churches to accept a fee or offering for falsely teaching the cruel superstition that there is such a god and furthermore claiming that this unseen invisible deity can be contacted and will perform miracles constitutes a fraud. As far as I am concerned you pastors being local agents for the churches are party to this gigantic hoax, which with the blessing of kings and queens and the help of politicians, has been able to flourish and operate through the centuries in many countries until now it has reached racket proportions and has become a veritable international

Frankenstein of wealth and power. The fact that the church has acquired respectability because of its political influence makes the charges against it no less true.

I trust that by now you know why this particular ordained Methodist minister gave up his belief in the supernatural. I refused to remain in the pulpit and be an intellectual hypocrite. I renounced my religion even though it was the unpopular thing to do. I gave the church my best years. I was forty years old when I woke up. It is too bad I did not wake up sooner. Fortunate circumstances made it possible for me to make the break when I did. I am by no means the first for there have been many priests, rabbis and ministers before me who have done the same thing;. The woods are full of them. Who knows you may be next. This may make you shudder but be a thinking man and decide for yourself.

Agnostic or Atheist?

One should not declare himself an atheist until he has satisfied himself through study.. But after you have satisfied yourself through intensive study, and then have the audacity to claim that you do not know whether or not there is a god, you must be stubborn indeed. If you are logical you have no basis for hiding under the cover of agnosticism. It is no sign of scholarship to say that you do not know when the facts are clear. If it is a case of reserving your opinion because of humility or modesty I accuse you of false modesty. You are hedging when you say that you do not know and it is indeed cowardly to reserve your opinion for the rest of your life. Why die with that hesitant attitude hanging over you instead of taking a courageous stand? After you have made an exhaustive study of this subject and have thoughtfully studied the countless books on the origin and psychology of religious beliefs, as well as the bloody history of religion's wild and cruel practices, you are entitled to form an opinion, especially on the negative side, (the atheistic side) as that side does not have to be proved. It is the theist who must prove his theory that a god exists. So far it has never been done even in philosophy. As for science that precise field does not even consider the question of god as worthy of attention and don't you think that science would not

consider the question if there was any evidence or probability of a god's existence. It would be necessary to consider the hypothesis for science deals with anything that relates to natural laws and since gods allegedly are coaxed by means of prayer into changing natural laws the scientists would find this line of pursuit most intriguing. However since there is no evidence of a god the matter is not pursued. Professors are under censorship and dare not lose their jobs by denying the existence of god so they tabu the subject by politely alluding to it as exclusively a religious matter.

Cheer Up! It is not so Bad

My dear friends if I have shocked you forgive me. If I have taken away your lord fear not. You will gain some- thing better. Naturally people feel gloomy when they fear they have lost something precious. You have survived many disappointments in life and it is too bad that you must suffer another but you can take it and you will be the better for it.

You may think that when I deny that there is a Lord that I spread a note of pessimism. You are mistaken for I bring you tidings of great joy. Let me loudly proclaim my message from the housetops. Let me shout it up and down the land. Rejoice! Oh rejoice! Let me repeat I bring tidings of great joy. I bring you the exciting good news that there is no longer a hell with licking scorching flames, to painfully sear your friends and loved ones, day in and day out, throughout all eternity, which is indeed a long time. Neither are there ghosts nor devils nor eerie monsters to frighten the little babes in Sunday school. Their nervous systems will be the better for it. There will be no more nightmares as a result of these frightful teachings. And there will be no more wars of man killing his fellowmen because he has been taught a different religion. He who would deny all this is the bearer of bad news. He it is who is the pessimist. He who tells you that god sentences people to beds of sickness and pain or who sends floods, earthquakes, fires, epidemics and famines as punishment. He it is who is the real pessimist. What a gloomy character he is. Deliver me from the bearer of such tales. He is poison to me and my children. He is a mad man. He should be tied up. He is not safe running

around loose. My friends your atheist may be a realist but he is not a pessimist. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. So I say again rejoice! Rejoice that the atheist is abroad in the land fearlessly and courageously declaring in the highways and byways that the venomous mutterings of the money-mad evangelists are truly false. Turn a deaf ear to their ignorant rantings. The atheist has come to save you. Rejoice! Was it not Schopenhauer who wrote, "to free a man from error is to give not take away." That is what we atheists are aiming at. We are not rascals. My friend, The Hon. Culbert L. Olson, ex-governor of California recently said "Emancipation from the mental slavery of religious superstition and its exploitation by charlatans is as essential to the progress of civilization as is the emancipation from physical slavery."

Keep your chin up! It is not so bad. You can get along without god. Actually you have been getting along without him right along. You thought that god was protecting you but he wasn't. Those prayers that were not answered remember them? You knew not why your god kept you guessing so often. You wondered why he permitted so much suffering. Now you know why. There was no god all the time. When you asked your pastor about those unanswered prayers remember what he said? Like a true salesman he had to alibi and think fast. Of course he had a stock answer. According to him it was not God's will. You were told that god knows best and that god is more discerning and that his ways are higher than man's ways. Priests and ministers tell many white lies to assuage you. I did it myself many times when consoling people. Silly wasn't it?

Perhaps you have been puzzled by the suffering and misery you have either experienced or witnessed. You have wondered what sin a certain innocent party committed to deserve such suffering. I have seen some real nice patients worry about this question. It is pathetic. I am sure if you were god and consequently able to do miracles your heart would respond quickly to alleviate the pain and misery of helpless people. Of course you would. "You would be on the ball" immediately. You would not wait to be pleaded with in prayer for you would know as any first class god should know that some very sick people are in such misery that their minds are too confused to formulate a prayer. You would not be guilty of cruel neglect. Yet the

Christian god not only permits earthly suffering but threatens more torture later which makes him a sadist indeed. No human father would treat his children that way. Now of course this writer does not blame god for his seeming neglect, for one very simple reason, and that is the good news that he does not exist. There you have in that sentence the kindest explanation for god's inconsistency and cruelty that can be given to the world by a former minister of the gospel.

If you have had doubts about god in the past followed by feelings of guilt for which you repented let me assure you that your "forbidden" thoughts were normal and intelligent and not sinful as your priest may have warned you. You should have followed it through. If you want happiness and enjoyment in this world give me your hand my friend so that I can lift you up from the swamp of superstition that has engulfed you and made your life miserable. Then you too can build yourself a new and better philosophy - a philosophy uncluttered with the cobwebs of church dogma. After that I predict you will think more clearly and reason more wisely. It will take time. It will require much analytical reading. You will have to break old habit patterns such as I did. In other words you will need to adjust just as others have done after so radical a change. After twenty-four years of being an atheist I have built myself a philosophy far far superior to that which I have ever had before. Life for me now is more adventurous. I remember when I used to lean on god's everlasting arms just as the church hymns said I should.- But at- last I have thrown away my crutches. How else can one learn self reliance? Stop leaning dear friend and try ever so hard to stand alone on your own two feet. I used to believe that a man was an heir of god in the same sense that a rich man's son is an heir to his father's wealth. But HOW with no heavenly father to draw on I have had to learn what many tycoons wish their young heirs would more quickly learn. STOP LEANING AND DEPENDING ON THE OLD MAN. In short acquire self reliance. See what I mean?

As I inferred above the Sunday school hymns will harm you if you don't watch out. For example "Trust and obey for there is no other way." Or, "God will take care of you" and similar hymns condition the youthful singers by auto-suggestion. HOW is your boy thus mentally "brain washed" going to learn to shift for himself? Do you want

him to grow up to be a mollycoddle and a weakling? If your youngster is taught that god will provide food, raiment, a passing exam, a job or a mate, he will do little or nothing to improve himself and he will evolve into a wishful thinker or procrastinator, always putting things off and continually lacking in initiative at home and in business. I tell you religion is no good for your child. Not if you want him to succeed. After youth truly believes that god will take care of him he is apt to be a "dizzy brained" happy go lucky optimist and careless with his life. If god is looking after him why should he worry? No wonder he is careless and reckless or indolent. Optimism based on such a flimsy foundation is false optimism. My good friends is it not better to teach your offspring that there is no god to look after him and that he is definitely on his own? He can take it and you would be doing him or her a favor. Let him grow up. Teach the child that it is a realistic world where anything and everything can and does happen. Teach your sprout that it is a world where people really need to be brotherly for they need each other and without brotherhood they stand alone.

If you are one of those who still stubbornly insists that the world just must have a god all I can advise is to modestly PLAY THAT ROLE YOURSELF. It may bring you happiness and cause people to believe in you a little more. Get a good education so that you better alleviate men's sufferings and injustices. But never, O never, think of yourself as a god. Let that word be obsolete in your vocabulary. Belief that men are gods is a dangerous doctrine to bat around. Like the doctrine of kings by divine right, it breeds dictators and despots. Gods imaginary or human have caused enough misery in this world already. Let us be rid of them.

Cheer up friends. Do not be appalled if life seems to have no purpose. If there is no apparent purpose in evolution or in the scheme of things and you are despondent about it you can do something about that too. You can put a purpose into your life. You can go about doing good. Do something that needs to be done. Without a god there is plenty to do. The world needs you. Have a goal. Have a philosophy. No religion or church has a monopoly on morals or ethics despite what the clergy say.

The World in a State of Flux

The writer is of course a materialist. It is no doubt fitting because of the unusual circumstances surrounding my life that I have embraced the philosophy of change as a part of my philosophy pattern. In so doing I am not committed to all of Heraclitus nor of Bergson. In building our private philosophies we can and should sift and borrow in part or in toto what we like from the philosophies of others. The world though seemingly static is in a constant state of flux. Aside from its application to physics and chemistry I have found change likewise to be true of one's environment. We may be rich today and poor tomorrow or vice versa. Time is the great factor. With apologies to those who preach dogmatically that prayer changes things I say that TIME changes things. If the world is dark and you are down in the dumps given time the situation will surely change for the better. Nothing stands still. So if you are contemplating suicide wait my unhappy friend for the tide to change. Do not be hasty. The astute financier does not get panicky when his stocks go tumbling down in a bear market for he knows from experience that the market like everything else is in a state of flux. It fluctuates It will rise again. In our economic system many lost fortunes have been regained.

"Know thyself," said Socrates. To that I would add know thy environment and know the law of change and be prepared for changes be they for better or worse. If you are born rich do not always expect to be fed with a silver spoon. Be realistic. Anything can happen. If you are a rich man's son some day you may have to get out and hustle. If you have accumulated a fortune through your own efforts a change for the worse can even happen to you. This is not pessimism. It is realism. Knowing and understanding the natural laws of cause and effect it is not such a bad world after all is it? Isn't it better and more exciting and more adventurous to operate under these natural laws, than to have the fear that there is a dictator god somewhere in the universe, arbitrarily interfering with your actions, with you wondering what this fickle unpredictable god is going to do next? In this book I have tried to offer you something more sound than such a childish superstition. "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan, the proper study of mankind is Man." Pope's "Essay on Man."

Books of interest:

Some of you are in for a session of serious reading. You may have read your pastor's books, now read the other side. When you have read these liberating books I hope you will feel like shouting as I did "Eureka." That is to say "I have found it."

For example, read Bertrand Russel's *Why I Am Not A Christian* and Hector Hawton's *The Thinkers Handbook*. Read *The Origin and Evolution of The Idea of a Soul* by Paul La Fargue.

The great Robert G. Ingersoll was so far ahead of his time that his lectures are still worth reading. Catch his spirit. Thomas Paine with his *Age of Reason*, written in colonial times likewise was way ahead of his time. He will amaze you. *The Golden Bough* by Frazer is another old classic. Homer W. Smith's *Man and His Gods* which has a foreword by Albert Einstein is a must. It is an education in itself and should be useful as an all around reference book. *The Riddle of the Universe* by Ernst Haeckel should be in the library of every materialist. I value highly the large Rationalist encyclopedia by Joseph McCabe. I have read just about everything that this former Catholic professor and priest has written. Besides being a popularizer of science he is an authority on the history of the Catholic church. I have always felt indebted to the late Haldeman-Julius who expressed the meaning of democracy better than most writers that I have read. I greatly value his 26 volume set of *Questions and Answers*, which may be hard to get. *The Shackles of the Supernatural* by William J. Fielding is another book that impressed me. One of my early favorites was *God and my Neighbor* by Robert Blatchford. He is one of the most orderly writers it has been my pleasure to read. He writes a book like you would build a house. After laying a solid foundation he proceeds step by step expertly driving home every nail. You will love it. Space will not permit me to mention the many books that have thrilled me. My good friend James Hervey Johnson of San Diego has written a book called *Superior Men*. It is a good book to start with. Also be sure to subscribe to a rationalist, humanist or freethought magazine such as: *Age of Reason*, *American Rationalist*, *The Humanist*, and *The Truth Seeker*.



James Hervey Johnson

James Hervey Johnson first published the following piece in 1949. From his youth until his death in 1988, he was a freethinker. He was against dogma in any form. He fought superstition, fear, ignorance and organized religions. MrJohnson also left the largest financial legacy ever for the advancement of freethought.

Superior Men

by James Hervey Johnson

Religion is Largely Inherited.

We receive our first introduction to religion from our parents. As children we are so ignorant that we must be taught even to walk. We know nothing of science, nothing of history, nothing of the world. Before we have learned to even read we are taken to church or Sunday school and are told certain things about religion.

We are told that there is a God with supreme power over everything. He cannot be seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted. We are supposed to take the Sunday school teacher's word for His existence.

We are told that the Son of God was born of a woman who never had sexual intercourse with a man. Children are taught that when we die our soul survives. There is no proof. We are expected to accept that statement without proof. Each man who tells us of the survival of the soul in Heaven has a different conception. We do not know where Heaven is. We do not know what a soul is. We are told of Hell, but it cannot be shown to us.

The things we are told about religion are mythical, impossible of proof, and yet we are expected to believe them because our parents or the priests and preachers tell us they are true.

As children we have no way of investigating the facts and arriving at the truth. We dare not show doubts, dare not ask for proof, and usually accept what we are told without questioning it. Our parents have accepted what they were told by their parents, and the priests and preachers got the first information from their parents, and later from books written by priests and preachers who got their information from other priests and preachers.

As children we are not taught all sides of religious questions. In fact, every effort is made to prevent children from getting any favorable information about any religion other than that of their parents.

Having developed no reasoning faculty we accept the statements made to us. We can do nothing else. The early training becomes a habit. The early impressions of religion are deeply recorded just as the erroneous belief in Santa Claus is impressed on young minds devoid of the ability to discern the falsity of the fable.

If each child was allowed to wait until mature age and was then required to study all religions, few persons would be believers.

The world is religious because children are given only one side of a many-sided question.

Chapter Two

Religions Were Developed in Ancient Times

Most religions with followings of any size were developed by primitive people hundreds or thousands of years ago.

The Jewish religion has roots purportedly 6000 years old. The Christian religion is based on purported happenings some 1900 years ago. The Mohammedan religion originated about 1100 years ago and is an off-shoot of the basic Semitic or Jewish religion, which was probably a mixture of earlier smatterings of philosophy from the still more ancient Assyrians, Chaldeans, Egyptians and Hindus.

Our religious books and ideas have been carried down from those remote times and we are expected to follow the teachings and alleged orders of gods issued from 2,000 to 10,000 years ago.

Those ancient writers knew nothing of modern science. They had no telescopes to learn of astronomy. They did not realize that there are billions of stars. They had no scientific instruments. Their education was primitive. Priests and preachers were almost the only scribes. The common people knew little except what they were told by their rulers. Mental horizons were restricted by lack of communication with other peoples. Those who wrote the Bible didn't know that the earth was round or that America existed. They knew nothing of the North pole or South pole. The flood of their own district was a flood of the whole world to them. Airplanes, trains, autos, and steamships were unknown. Roads were trails, and travel was by

horse or camel-back or by oxen, ass, or on foot. Twenty miles in a day was a long journey.

Few people ever got far from home. There was no mail system. Rulers could send messengers running in relays but one auto today can cover more territory in a half hour than the runners did then in a whole day.

A man's village, or the company of his fellow herdsman was almost his only opportunity for obtaining knowledge.

Man's mentality was poorly developed because there was little opportunity to develop it. Primitive minds had no store of scientific knowledge to draw from. They speculated and guessed at the facts of life. It was from the minds of such untutored primitive people that conceptions of gods, demons devils, genii, angels, and all of the unseen manipulators of human destinies were imagined.

Are we still so undeveloped mentally that we must rely on the imaginings of ignorant, backward minds of primitive peoples to determine the cause of our lives and thoughts in these days of scientific development and opportunities for study and knowledge?

Intelligent persons do not accept their primitive teachings.

Chapter Three

The Probable Origin of Religious Festivals

There is now a tendency by would-be scientists to explain primitive religions on the basis of man's so-called need for spiritual development. They put the cart before the horse. The so called spiritual development is a result of the many ages of primitive, superstitious, and religious practices. They seek to excuse a characteristic of mankind that maintains superstitious practices which conflict not only with scientific knowledge but also with common knowledge.

Religious festivals usually occur at seasonal changes. Many religious festivals occur in the Spring, at mid-Summer and in the fall.

All of these festivals can be traced back to natural causes. Early man was greatly dependent upon the sun. During eclipses he was in fear that sunshine might not return. Even today in China, this primi-

tive practice is followed by beating drums, cymbals, and blowing horns to try to drive away the dragon which is supposed to be swallowing the sun. Early man must have been afraid of the dark, because he had no fire and not much protection against animals. Hence, it was easy to understand early man's worshipping the sun as practiced by the Mazdaznans, an early Persian sect which still exists, by the Aztecs and Incas of the New World, and by many primitive religious groups. The sun was personified and worshipped as a god. The early Greeks and Romans followed this practice. The sun was all-powerful and meant everything to the primitives. The forces of darkness which swallowed up or drove away the sun were the enemies of mankind and these evolved into the Devil and into Satan. The hells of the ancient Greeks and the primitive Christians and other religions were underground, where the forces of darkness were supposed to hold forth, unable to withstand the power of the sun.

It is easy to understand the moon as a deity because the moon gave them light and turned nights of discomfort and possible terror into something more tolerable. So the year was based on the time of the earth's movement around the sun and the month was based on the time of the changes of the moon. The word month itself originated from the word moon.

As the days grew shorter darker and colder during Fall and Winter, man's apprehension of disaster increased. But when the medicine men, witch doctors and primitive priests were able to point out that the days increase after the Winter solstice, their fears became allayed and it was time for celebration and sacrifice. Even the custom of presents being given and the Santa Claus story originated in ancient Scandinavian, non-Christian customs. Some of the primitive religious leaders took advantage of early man's ignorance to claim credit for these seasonal changes.

The Christian religion chose to take advantage of the seasonal changes to produce their religious festivals simply by substituting Christ for the Sun God as a personified savior.

Easter brings another season that is Spring, when the full power of the Sun begins to express itself. The trees and flowers burst forth with leaves and fruit, and birds and other animals, even primitive man, instinctively recognized Spring as the mating season. Here again

is an occasion for celebration of the conquest of the powers of light over the powers of darkness. And in those latitudes where there is a change of season, the celebration is universal.

After the Summer and the harvests, when man has reaped the benefits of the long Summer season, it is natural that he should celebrate, and that the feeling of agreeableness at his success should be expressed in the festivals of thanksgiving, which are common in practically all countries. Here again the priests and primitive religious leaders required a religious expression of celebration.

Like the primitive peoples of Africa, the South Seas, and India to-day, early man considered every tree and stone to have a spirit. Animism is a common characteristic of all primitive peoples. This was fostered by the mysterious and unexplained sounds of thunder, the angry lashing of lightning, the mysterious sounds of the woods and forests, of the wind, the sea, the rivers, and the crackling of ice and rocks caused by expansion. Weather changes gave him the ideas of spirits and devils which could do him harm unless he sacrificed to them.

There is little doubt that the origin of the folk stories about spirits and fairies developed from the phosphorescent lights of the swamps and fens, from the lightning bugs, fireflies, the phosphorescent sea life and from the phosphorescent fungus in the forest. These strange lights must have filled him with a feeling of fear and foreboding. Some of the Irish and Scandinavian stories of fairies and spirits can be traced to such origin. Thus, it is understandable how religion evolved from these simple but mysterious natural phenomena, and, as is explained in another Chapter, these imaginings and ideas, once started, were difficult to stop. Primitive man feared to express any doubt as to the power of these spirits or gods or devils. At times being invisible, they might know what he was thinking or talking about and harm him.

Today the more primitive tribes of the South Seas, Africa, North and South America and India still carry a great many kinds of amulets, tokens, stones, chains, beads and all manner of things to protect them from the imagined evil spirits, and as a protection against possible evil happenings. And many of them believe in it. One crafty company went so far as to advertise a steel covered Bible to be

worn over the heart, probably recognizing that the bullet-proof steel would offer more protection than the Holy Word.

There has never been a scientific study of the success of charms and amulets. Nature seldom harms an individual. Lightning strikes someone only occasionally. For the average man it was easy to believe in the powers of the amulet and when an accident did occur, it was quickly realized that he was being punished for a sin. So, from these simple steps, more complicated customs, practices, and religious systems gradually grew through the ages to those of the present day.

Chapter Four

Dreams, Nightmares and Visions

Primitive man, living in the midst of wild animals, probably had very vivid nightmares of being attacked by wild and horrid animals. Probably real escapes in daytime were horribly exaggerated at night in his dreams.

It was natural for primitive man to believe that the souls or spirits of the animals were after him. Hence the efforts of primitive man to appease the spirits of reptiles and other animals. The Hindus fear to kill monkeys, cobras and tigers for fear the spirits of these dangerous beasts would cause them death and injury.

Witch doctors were swift to prey upon the fears of their weaker minded fellow men. They talked of gods, manufactured from their own dreams and visions.

It was only a step to add horrible looking devils and gods, often half men and half beast. Even the Christian devil has horns and a tail.

The primitive races in China, Tibet, Japan, India, Africa, the South Seas and the Indians of the Americas had totems, tiger and animal gods and devils. The primitive rites of many religions practiced today, demand the worship of all of these fetishes, gods, devils and images. The dancing around them, the sacrifice, the night rituals, the music, the tomtoms' repetitions all served to impress the images of the spirit - devil gods in the minds of the people and as they had little else to

think about, they would dream and have visions of these things and that would serve to make them believe still more the claims of the priests and witch doctors.

The great ritual and impressive ceremonies of the Catholic Church cannot help but impress childish and weak minds. Hence it is very reasonable to attribute the visions of Saints, the Virgin Mary, and Christ to the dreams and nightmares of those who have been subjected to the influence of these rituals and ceremonies. The many so-called visitations which appear from time to time to children or priests or simple minded people are by 'saints' and 'gods' with messages claimed to verge on the miraculous.

From time to time I dream of my father, who was my partner and close associate all my life until his death. Sometimes the dreams are vivid and I dream that I am discussing various matters with him as I did when he was alive.

The dreams of ignorant people may seem to them to be meetings with those in the spirit world. Knowing that their friends and relatives are dead, it is easy for ignorant or insane or eccentric (off-center emotionally or mentally) people to believe that they are talking to the souls of the dead.

Hence, primitive men divided the person into a soul and a body. The appearance of a shadow following a man may have also had much to do with the dual combination.

Epileptics, paranoiacs, insane people could well be considered as having been under the influence of devils - because at times they appeared sane and at other times insane.

Insane people, epileptics, eccentrics, also seem to have more vivid dreams, both night and day than normal people. They could report such dreams very vividly. Sometimes under influence of drugs or wine they might have prolonged dreams or visions.

Normal people who had dreams could embellish them and tell them for the approbation they received from those not so highly gifted with imagination.

Thus do we have a rational explanation of visions and revelations, and spiritualism.

The study, difficult as it is, of primitive races, their superstitions and religions, indicates that the mass and maze of supernatural phe-

nomena such as visions, revelations, spirits, souls, conversations with various Gods, originates from their feeble efforts to explain such things as dreams, shadows, the singing of rocks, sands, trees and all natural phenomena which cannot be distinctly and easily, directly explained by immediate and obvious connection. If the wind makes a rock whistle or sing when no mouth is shown, the primitive mind attributes the act to the soul of the rock.

Having once impressed an audience, a dreamer or "visioneer" may become somewhat of a petty celebrity. Gradually he may become better known and eventually he would gain greater influence, and the benefits and ease of living, that his superstitious and awe-inspired primitive associates might give him, because they hope he might intercede with unseen powers for their benefits - or they might fear, that he could have evil spirits damage them if they incurred the wrath of the "visioneer," or medicine man or priest.

As the deference to him and his power grew, he would be able to prevent criticism of himself or his associates - excommunicate those who disapproved of his actions or who dared to raise the voice of suspicion or infidelity. Most religions have grown because they were able to suppress criticism and because they were able to pound day in and day out, their ritual into the minds of the impressionable children.

The leaders of the religious and superstitious from the smallest to the greatest have always led lives of ease and plenty, often they were exempt from war while others were sent to disease, injury and death. It was always to their great financial advantage to foster their religion and to keep their dupes in ignorance, so they used the torch, inquisition, torture, prison, and defamation of character to suppress inquiry, infidelity, agnosticism and doubt.

So men's minds have been bent one way only. There was only one side to be heard. A tree bends with the breeze. So it is with the ignorant, herded masses. They bend the way they are forced by the strong winds of superstition which blow them in one direction only.

Chapter Five

The Tendency to Accept Religious Teachings Blindly is a Product of Evolution.

Among primitive people those who openly doubted the witch doctor were often killed or imprisoned. During the Middle Ages millions of persons were tortured and killed because they expressed doubts about the religious teachings they were expected to believe.

In our own country, in 1948, it is difficult, if not impossible, to broadcast against religion on radio. The moving picture shows dare not present anti-religious pictures. No candidate for public office dares to declare himself an atheist. Ostracism awaits any man who expresses doubt as to the existence of God. Immediately, a storm of protest by priests, preachers and their followers would be centered on the head of the doubter. In some countries the free thinker would be mobbed.

Fear keeps men from expressing themselves - fear of being ostracized socially, fear of being killed (in some countries), fear of losing business, fear of losing votes, fear of ridicule, fear of abusive censure.

Even in the year this book is written, men in England are being sent to prison as criminals, because they refuse to pay taxes to the Church of England.

In Ohio and Maryland it is a crime to play certain games on Sunday because the Bible is reputed to hold such "sins" in disfavor.

In Tennessee and Arkansas it still is a crime to teach in tax supported public schools that man is descended from a lower order of animals.

For ages men have been killed, imprisoned, tortured and ruined socially, financially and physically because they refused to believe the things they were told by priests, witch doctors, medicine men, preachers, and rulers. And all because no religion can stand the searchlight of honest investigation. Truth will destroy any religion. The only defense against truth that religious leaders have, is to suppress it.

By the rule of survival, only those who believed what they were told, or who kept their own beliefs to themselves, have lived and had off spring. Many of the great men who were honest and independent, who openly opposed teachings contrary to reason, were killed or imprisoned; thus they did not have so many children to carry on their genetic strain.

Priests, preachers, witch doctors, kings and rulers wanted the kind of people who believed what they were told to believe, and like the stock raiser who discards the strains he does not like, the rulers have discarded the independent, reasoning thinkers whenever they had a chance. By the process of selection, the "believers" predominate. The men with minds capable of independent thought are few. The instinct of sheep-like belief in what they are told is so strong in most people that they will not even listen to arguments contrary to those their "shepherd" tells them.

Newspapers receive advertisements from churches and carry church propaganda in their news columns just like any other advertiser's publicity is carried. Politicians get votes in blocks from the churches, so they subsidize them by allowing the churches exemption from taxes.

As preachers, priests, bishops, popes, and other church promoters receive their often luxurious living from gullible believers, so a huge machine works to keep the people in the fold.

Docility of their subjects is the prime quality desired by all rulers and religions.

Just as cattle raisers develop docile cattle which will be bred, raised and slaughtered without reasoning, opposing, or complaining, so have the rulers, preachers, and priests attempted, with universal success, to evolve a mass of docile, believing people.

Many members and leaders of the Catholic Church openly supported the war of extermination waged by the rebels of Spain who murdered, imprisoned, or suppressed every citizen of that country who wanted to support the government which the majority of Spanish people placed in power by an honest election. Since that time, the Catholic Church has been placed in complete control of the education and teaching of the children. Freedom of speech and of religion has vanished. The Catholic Church has been established as a

State Church and is supported by taxes levied on the people, a majority of whom do not want such control over their lives.

Many with great properties and high salaried position will even assist in murder to protect their special privileges, because they know that their following, their salaries, exemptions and privileges will vanish when the minds of their docile followers begin to depend on reason instead of trusting belief.

Chapter Six

The Mentality of the Common Man is Very Low

The great mass of people are very stupid. They are kept in stupidity by their rulers, priests, and preachers. All they know is to eat, gorge themselves to the point of sickness, work when they have to, procreate, repeat like parrots, what they hear, have their childish pastimes and die after a life of being exploited by corrupt rulers, politicians, preachers, priests, and other parasites on the body politic.

Intelligence is not a necessity for survival. Rabbits have little intelligence, yet in a few years they overran the whole of Australia and grew from a few to millions. Stupid people multiply just as fast as intelligent people and under present conditions much faster.

Let us look at the mentality of the common mind. A baby is born. Its parents talk "baby talk" to it for four or five years. During that time it plays with toys, is entirely dependent on its parents, and cannot complete even its natural functions without assistance. It is almost unable to reason, to consider, to compare facts, to determine between right and wrong. It may have been brought up under the Santa Claus illusion and may have been taught that this mythical person flies through the air in a sleigh led by reindeer, and that Santa Claus comes down the chimney while his reindeer remain on the roof, then fills stockings with gifts and candy. Of course, the whole childish story has arisen in the minds of ignorant people of ages ago. Every effort is made to fool the child. While it is in bed, the father or someone else puts gifts in the stockings, even rattles sleigh bells and does other tricks to fool the youngster. Because it is given toys to play with,

candy and other gifts, the child looks forward to this deception, and in fact, many grown persons never advance very far beyond the Santa Claus state of mentality; they want Christmas trees all their lives.

At about five years the child is sent to school, which he doesn't like. In kindergarten, he is taught how to cut paper dolls and smear water colors. Next year he is taught the alphabet, how to read and write, and later arithmetic. He is often sent to Sunday School and taught to repeat a lot of rigamarole which he doesn't understand. He is told that such and such is a fact and doesn't dare, even if he wanted to, dispute what he is told by his elders or teachers.

Later, he is taught a little history, how to sing childish songs, a little painting, how to spell, and is given simple books to read. He is taught fairy stories and a little geography. When the youngster is old enough he is taught English, grammar, arithmetic, a carefully revised history of the United States, then histories of Greece, Rome, Medieval Europe, England, and the Western Hemisphere. He learns little about Asia, the primitive peoples and their superstitions, the sex worship of the Hindus, the religions of China, Persia, Arabia-Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Japanese Shintoism, Mohammedanism, and the atheism of Russia and even of his sister Republic, Mexico. The cults and blurred ideas of primitive peoples are not given him. He is not taught to read Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Robert Ingersoll and other great leaders of advanced thought.

Much of what he does read or is taught is too much for his weak intelligence. He usually cares little for it and if it were not for compulsion, he wouldn't even go to school. He is more interested in girls, moving picture shows, driving a car, games, football, baseball, dances, sex stories and other simple pastimes, than he is in his studies.

At 18 to 25, unless he goes to college, his education practically stops except for what he gets out of the daily papers, perhaps a magazine full of sex stories, and a moving picture with exaggerated sex or love as the main feature.

Philosophy, history, knowledge of peoples and their religious customs, and science are not interesting to him. He gets a job, marries and drifts along. If he goes to church to please his mother, or his

wife, or sweetheart, he gets religious ideas which are vague and blurred in his mind. He does not see anything in the papers against religion, the movies do not carry any such information nor is it broadcast by the radio.

If he wants such information, he must buy books or get them from the library or take special magazines. This is too much trouble, as a rule, and so he drifts along, works when he has to, goes to his club, or his sports, sleeps, eats, has his sexual experience, perhaps raises a few children and doesn't care much whether the stuff he is told by a preacher is true or not.

There are some who do study and develop a reasoning mind, but they are a very small percentage of the public. We are talking of the great mass, 95% of which works most of its life, wastes, gambles, and drinks up its income so that it must be supported by private or public charity after the individuals are 50 years of age.

Because this great mass of humanity believes that there is a god, that Christ was born of a virgin and that those who believe as the preachers tell them, will go to Heaven and live a life of eternal happiness, does not make it true.

Most people simply do not know any better. They are ignorant. They have been told religious fables just like the Santa Claus fable and they have no way of knowing the truth. They have heard only one side. They do not realize that 400,000,000 Chinese believe a different story, that 300,000,000 Hindus have 80 religions, that 200,000,000 Mohammedans have a still different belief and that millions of primitive people believe thousands of divisions of their own religions. All are different and all think other religions are false.

They are continually, mentally whipped, by priests and preachers and those who profit from religion, into antagonism toward other churches.

Their leaders make them think they are better than followers of other religions. The Jews were told that they were "God's chosen people." Every circumstance of fortune which favored them was said to be a sign of their God's protection. Every misfortune to those with other religions and gods was said to be because the Jew's God was unfavorable to the other religion. When great calamities came upon the Jews, the priests claimed it was because the Jews had sinned, that

is, disobeyed the priests and rulers who, of course, claimed to represent their God.

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the only true church. For 1500 years the leaders of this church killed, maimed, imprisoned, tortured, burned at the stake and destroyed everyone they could who refused to believe and publicly profess their belief as their priests told them they should.

The Adventists believe that those who do not belong to their religion will be destroyed at the "second coming of Christ." The Mormons think that the "Gentiles" (the word they use to describe all non Mormons) are beyond the pale and will lose their "souls." All young Mormon men and girls are supposed to be missionaries for a year or two, at their own expense, to help get more converts in the field.

Men of intelligence should listen to the claims of all religions. Then the great conflict and absurdity of the claims can be well realized.

If the gods or priests of any of these religions were all powerful, as their leaders claim them to be, they could confound all other religions and there would be only one. But about the only way they can expand their religions is to use the sword, or send missionaries with medical or other physical benefits to work on the minds of primitive people in Africa, the South Seas, Asia, or South America.

The mentality of our average citizen is very low. Millions of Americans will not begin a journey on the 13th or on Friday. Millions of words about Friday the 13th are printed in the daily papers. Thousands of articles are written by newspaper reporters and editors about what happens to people on the 13th. Many hotels do not number their rooms "13" because ignorant people will not sleep in a room with such a number. Even railroads are said not to number their cars "13" because ignorant, religious, superstitious people will not ride in cars so numbered.

The fact that millions of people have traveled on Friday, slept in rooms numbered "13," traveled on Friday the 13th, etc., doesn't keep these people from their superstitious dread of the "mystic" number.

Other ignorant people, claiming good fortune, will tap on wood to keep their luck from changing, whenever they mention their good fortune. Housewives have dozens of similar superstitions, such as

dropping dish rags, forks or spoons, reading tea leaves, coffee grounds, etc.

Millions of dollars are given annually to fortune tellers, astrologers, spiritualists, and other "wizards" and "witches" by ignorant, stupid people who more or less believe what these fakes tell them.

Many business men spend large sums in consulting mediums, clairvoyants, psychics, and fortune tellers. women patronize tea readers, card readers and similar racketeers who grow rich from the credulity of their dupes.

As the years have passed since this book was first started, the tremendous stupidity of the masses of the people becomes more amazing. Apparently, the ability to reason is confined to a very small percentage of people. The masses almost invariably follow not the intelligent leaders who would bring peace, prosperity and happiness to the world, but the worst leaders who bring war, crime, disease and mental darkness. It is all the more important then, that the search for those few men who have the ability to reason be pushed. There are many whose eyes have not been opened, because, although they may have personal intelligence, they have been kept under such a blanket of ignorance and superstition. The first glimmer of the light of reason or rather, the first information upon which they can base the falsity of current doctrines, has been withheld. To such men this book will open a new world of intelligence and light. If the spark is in the mentality of the individual, the opening wedge will be sufficient to start him on the road to being a Superior Man.

Whole nations vote themselves into slavery on the promise of something for nothing from selfish or even insane leaders. Labor racketeers take heavy tribute from every person in the U. S. As a people we consume billions of gallons of poisonous drinks, such as alcoholic liquors, which we know are detrimental to our health. Loafers, in league with crooked politicians sponge on the people who work and save. The incompetents, the lazy, and common chisellers blame everyone but themselves for their conditions, and using false accusations as excuses, try to fool a large section of the populace into believing that loafers and petty crooks are entitled to be supported at the expense of thrifty and hard working people.

Such, then, is the mental condition of the great mass of people in which superstition-religion flourishes.

Chapter Seven

Hypnotic Influence Probably Accounts for Much of Religion's Control Over its Subjects.

From the earliest times hypnotism may have played a prominent part in the influence church leaders have had over their followers. It is evident that ancient, primitive witch doctors and tribal wizards used hypnotism to influence the lay members of their tribes. There is little doubt that the dances, monotonous chants, worshipping at altars, burning of incense, as practiced by the primitive and even later religions or cults, had a hypnotic influence on the followers.

Dr. James Braid, originator of the words "hypnotism" and "hypnosis" says: "Hypnosis is essentially a state of mental concentration in which the faculties of the mind are so engrossed in a single train of thought, as for the nonce, to be dead or indifferent to all other considerations and influences."

In modern times, hypnotism is often induced by having the subject concentrate by keeping his eyes on a bright object or light, while the hypnotist gives suggestions in a powerful, confident, low pitched monotone. It has been found desirable to have the subject in a state of physical relaxation. A darkened room aids success. Constant repetition of the suggestions the operator wishes the subject to perform is advantageous. It is also of immense value that the subject have faith and confidence in the operator. Psychoanalysts claim that hypnosis is more easily induced when there is a parental fixation.

The word "hypnosis" means "sleep" derived from the name "Hypnos," the ancient Greeks' god of sleep. The modern definition of hypnosis is "artificial sleep."

Hypnotic influence begins in the cradle. Mothers put their children to sleep by following the typical hypnosis procedure. They darken or dim the room, place the child in a reclining position, rock it and sing in a soft voice, a repetitious lullaby. "Go to sleep, my baby"

is the constantly repeated suggestive theme of all lullabies. The child looks to its mother for practically everything, and, of course, has faith and confidence in her.

It is not generally recognized that this artificial slumber of the infant is induced by hypnotic methods nor do the masses realize that religious leaders, from witch doctors to the most polished preachers and priests, use similar methods. In all probability, the vast majority of religious leaders do not themselves understand that they are using a method of hypnosis in conducting the services and rituals of their cults and churches. The voodoo doctors and medicine men and even the more advanced religious leaders probably attribute their influence over their followers to their religious practices rather than to the formerly little understood hypnotic methods. They may believe that this influence is supernatural, which in itself strengthens their belief in their religion and often arouses them to even more fanatical activity, which in turn profoundly affects their followers.

Most people, listening intently to a lecture, sermon, or instructions in the school or college room, have at some time been put to sleep by the lecturer. Sometimes this artificial condition may be induced by the monotonous tone of the speaker or by an endeavor on the part of the listener to concentrate on his words or even by the eyes following the speaker's gestures. Possibly this is a result of the tiring or partial paralysis of the auditory or optic nerves. Anyone must realize that there is apt to be a special cause for sleep thus artificially induced and hypnotism is the most probable explanation.

Dr. Braid, analyzing the hypnotic state, says that it can be induced by "a fixed stare, paralyzing the nerve centers in the eyes and their appendages and destroying the equilibrium of the nervous system."

Subjects under hypnotic influence can endure surgical operations without pain, and a few decades ago, before modern anaesthetics, hypnotism was so employed by a number of eminent and successful physicians.

People under the influence of hypnotism may thus be considered in the same state as those under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or dope. For some unexplained reason, the first attack of any poison to

the system is on the reasoning faculty. Hypnotism is similar to and as powerful as, a poison.

Hypnosis in its milder form, is said by eminent psychologists to be used by great numbers of people in business, politics, religion, and medicine.

Gestures apparently have a considerable part in hypnotic phenomena. An orator's gestures often influence his audience as much as his words. It has been stated that the well established success of the commercial Jew is greatly assisted by the use of gestures, by constantly keeping the customer's mind fixed on the object for sale and by repeating endlessly, suggestions that he buy and that the goods are excellent, a bargain, etc. Few people indeed have failed to be influenced to buy articles which they really did not need.

Another aid to hypnotic influence is strange or unusual attire, particularly evident in religious practices. Practically all clerics wear odd clothing, even if it is only a collar on backwards or a beard. A loud voice, a determined manner, a peculiar appearance all serve to concentrate the subject on the words and actions of the hypnotist. Quite probably, paranoiacs, by their sincerity and determined manner, often hypnotically influence large numbers of people. A peculiar stare, common among paranoiac religious leaders, military dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini, evangelists, and political rabble rousers, apparently has some attracting influence, which holds the attention of the followers. Shouting, ranting, waving of the arms, as practiced by Billy Sunday and Aimee Semple McPherson, also have a profound influence. It is natural that attention is directed to anyone making loud noises and violent gestures. Possibly, the following of the gestures for a long time during an oration tires the eyes producing a paralyzing effect on the nerve centers as stated by Dr. Braid.

Even animals can be hypnotized and it is possible to place a chicken's beak on the ground, draw a straight line in front of it and produce a temporary condition, in which the chicken apparently is unable to move. Apparently the deadening effect of the repetition of sounds, such as the beating of the tomtom, the chanting of a priest, the singing of an audience or other musical means is effective. Sleep itself may be largely due to the tiring of the nerves which convey

outside messages to the mind and any method which artificially tires the nerves may thus produce artificial sleep.

There is a strong possibility that the interrogation methods used by some police in obtaining confessions from criminals are basically hypnotic. This procedure consists of turning extremely bright lights on the suspect, repeating constantly for hours, accusations and questions which have for their purpose, the suggestion, that the accused confess. Threatened violence apparently arouses the emotion of fear which temporarily side tracks the reasoning faculty. Interrogations and accusations by the police often continue so long that the accused is without sleep and it is quite probable that watching the pointing finger of accusation, the bright lights and the constant repetition, produces the hypnotic effect which often leads the accused to sign a confession of some crime which he did not commit. Nearly all confessions are later repudiated and it is reported from time to time in the press that accused persons have confessed to the murder of people who are later found very much alive. After almost any sensational murder, weak minded suspects arrested and questioned in several cities under this hypnotic system of questioning may confess to the crime. It is quite possible that numbers of innocent people have thus been induced to sign false confessions and have been sent to the gallows or for a long prison term for crimes of which they are not guilty. If upon thorough investigation, such is found to be the case, hypnotism should be eliminated as a method in police procedure.

The Encyclopedia Americana says that "subjecting an individual to hypnotic control constitutes robbing him of his will, as surely as if he were doped or under the influence of morphine."

Hypnosis was not understood nor analyzed before Dr. Braid did so, almost 100 years ago. Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer in 1700 understood how to influence patients by hypnotism, but did not understand it was a purely mental condition. He believed that it was induced by an invisible etheric fluid or a magnetic current running from the hypnotist or operator to the subject.

There is no doubt that the only explanation of the ancient, so called "miracles of healing" found throughout the literature and history of all religions were temporary states of hypnotism induced by the prophets, priests, and other religious leaders. Eminent psycholo-

gists now believe that Christ, if he lived, employed hypnotism, and that the power which he claimed to have and use in the performance of his miracles was hypnotism. Modern psychologists use hypnotism to eliminate mental complexes bordering on insanity. This would compare with the casting out of devils as described in religious literature, and hypnotism is now used to relieve physical and mental suffering. Those hypnotized could be told that their pain was eliminated and they could believe it. Those who believed that demons were bothering them could by suggestion, have this complex eliminated and they would thus be relieved of the annoyance of the "devils." Christ continually stressed the necessity of believing and having faith in him and his work, and that seems to be an important factor in any religion's control over its flock. Even today, people who suffer from imaginary complexes bordering on insanity are relieved by mental suggestion. They are placed in a hypnotic trance and the operator then suggests they have no ills.

Hypnotism is more than a sleep, it is a temporary elimination of the activity of the reasoning faculty. It is a mental condition in which the patient or the subject accepts as truth, statements made to him by the hypnotist. It is a "re-routing" of impressions. Instead of the impressions passing through the sentinel of the reasoning faculty, they apparently go to the portion of the brain which controls the reflexes of the individual. The subject, while in this state, can be induced to perform all manner of ridiculous, stupid, or humorous acts which he would never consider doing while normal.

It is quite probable that lawyers practicing before juries, knowingly or unknowingly, take full advantage of hypnotism. They sway juries to acquit criminals who the evidence indicates are guilty. No other explanation can account for the action of juries which render decisions contrary to the evidence. It is customary procedure for some attorneys to gesticulate, to shout, to point their fingers at the juries, then to talk in a soothing tone and lull the juries by a monotonous tone of voice similar to the methods used by the voodoo doctors, the priests or the preachers. Successful criminal lawyers are able to determine the susceptibility of prospective jurors and to eliminate those whom they do not believe can be influenced.

It is said that one of the important factors in the training of wild and dangerous beasts is that of preventing the animals from using their ability to concentrate. It is a common practice to have so much noise and racket around the animals during their training that their minds are constantly distracted and thus they do what they are told rather than what they would ordinarily do. Frequently at circuses, the band is placed over or near the wild animal cages during the act and the loudest, fastest music is played to assist in the distraction of the animals.

Now, the causes and results of hypnotism are well understood by noted scientists and many educated people. They were not understood nor fully explained a few decades ago. Hypnotism was considered a mysterious influence one person had over another and was associated with the supernatural by the masses. For centuries, people have used charms and amulets to protect themselves from the "evil eye" or what would now be explained as the hypnotic influence of one person over another. Even today, it is not generally understood as a natural condition brought about by various technical methods. Hypnosis in its more advanced stages is now commonly used by psychologists.

Primitive and modern religious leaders demand that the followers accept without question the statements made by the leaders. They must believe what is told to them even though it is apparent that such belief requires abandonment of all reason and logic. We have seen previously that hypnotism consists in the elimination of the control of the individual's reasoning faculty, and he is then subject to being influenced partly or completely by the hypnotist or religious leader. Thus hypnotism has undoubtedly been a very dominating factor in the subjugation of nearly all the peoples of the earth by the leaders of the various religions.

Among the earlier tribes, religious celebrations often took the form of dances. The monotonous beat of the tom tom, of the Indian drums, of the Tibetan cymbals had a deadening effect upon the reasoning portion of the brain. Constant religious dancing to the chants of the witch doctors or the priests or the repetitious chanting of the dancers themselves had a hypnotic effect. Many of the dances were held at night. Many of these rituals were around fires, probably these

rites have, through evolutionary processes, developed into the social dances of the present day and the feeling of relaxation and exhilaration of the dancers is aided by this same hypnotic influence. It is a well known fact that people who have worked all day can often dance half the night and not experience fatigue. Among the cults which practice the more violent dances, the members dance until they fall into a stupor, trance, or cataleptic condition, after which most or part of the physical activities are suspended. While in this condition, they can be pricked with pins, even cut with knives or have skewers twisted into their flesh without feeling pain. It is probable that this explains Hindu fakirs and South Sea islanders ability to walk on hot stones and to endure other forms of torture. It is a fact that hypnotism can relieve temporarily the feeling of pain. It is, therefore, safe to assume that the endless dancing and seemingly so-called super-human physical efforts by the Tibetan Lamas, result from hypnotism.

One of the desirable conditions for hypnotism is darkness or dimness. From the earliest times and even today, many religious rites take place at night. This is especially true among uncivilized peoples. Throughout the world most religious ceremonies are conducted in temples, caves or churches where darkness or dimness is the rule.

Another universal practice among all religions, from the earliest to the most modern, is that of the repetitious chant.

Still another common and old established practice is the constant repetition of phrases, prayers, songs, hymns, doxologies, and various similar verbal and vocal practices.

Probably dancing around a fire later evolved into worshiping before an altar. At first, the altar was a fire upon which a sacrificial offering, either human or animal was made and later eaten by the priests and at times, by the followers. The altar has now been conventionalized and no longer supports a sacrifice although some altars still retain the fire or candles or a bright object. Here again, we have a darkened room with the chants of the priest or the choir of singers and the audience themselves with their gaze fixed upon a lighted altar or bright object or the ornamented church leader himself; a perfect setting for hypnotic demonstration.

Add to these conditions, the gestures, the full or partial kneeling, the bowing, the facing in a certain direction, as is done by the

Mohammedans and the Jews, the covering or closing of the eyes during prayer and we have all of the requirements necessary for successful hypnosis. When under the leader's influence, the subjects are in a mood to accept and follow his suggestions.

It can easily be understood, by those with sufficient knowledge of human nature and evolutionary processes, how, by the constant repetition of the childish and often absurd religious rituals from childhood through adult life, that the great masses of peoples are in a constant state of mild or deeper hypnotism as to their religious beliefs, and that they "re-route" all matters concerning religion, past and around the reasoning faculty, which is dead as far as religion is concerned. They believe without questioning, reasoning, or doubting, what is told them by the witchdoctors, priests and religious leaders, often throughout their lives.

Psychoanalysts say that "father fixation" or parental substitution in the minds of the hypnotized subject is one of the factors that makes hypnotism easier. In earliest childhood and in fact, in infancy, the child or infant looks to his mother or father for all comforts and protection. If this "father-fixation" or parental confidence can be transferred to another person the immediate result is a lowering of the barrier of suspicion and fear with which the child or young animal looks upon nearly all except his parents. The additional factor of the preacher or priest calling his flock "his children," and the customary practice of calling the priest or religious leader "Father" also tends towards a transference of the confidence and the respect which children normally have for their parents. The use of the word brother and sister is also common among church congregations. Christ refers to his "father," and the New Testament is full of the word "brethren." Nuns are called sisters by the Catholics. It is a great aid to hypnosis to have the subject transfer his confidence to the hypnotist.

Gestures, symbols, prayer beads, rosaries, robes, wands, scepters, diadems, crowns, long beards, tall hats with jewels, are all a part of religious practice, which by unconscious evolutionary methods have proven of great value in the hypnotic control of the people by religious leaders.

Not only is this hypnotic influence used in religious matters, but it is also used consciously or unconsciously by various military dicta-

tors. The German goose step, the constant repetition of commands, the constant repetition of the pledges to Hitler, to Mussolini and to Stalin and to other military dictators, all result in a hypnotic condition. They dull the reasoning faculties of young people by this method. They sway them at their will and can thus order their young men to almost certain death for no benefit to themselves or their nation, except the aggrandizement of the military leader and his gang.

Unfortunately, the loss in the reasoning faculty in religious matters also often causes the loss of its use for other purposes and we thus have a race of people "bereft of reason" who are not able to determine what is best for them, their children or their nation. The result is a vast retardation of civilization.

To summarize the influence of hypnotism in the development of religion, we first take the method and practice of hypnotism:

The requirement of confidence in the operator; of the transference of the parental confidence to the operator.

The placing of the subject in a comfortable, relaxed condition. A desirable, but not necessary condition is one of dimness or darkness.

The fixation of the eyes upon a bright object which may cause a partial paralysis of the optic nerve.

The constant repetition of something the operator wants the subject to believe.

The calling of the priest, "father," the calling of the Deity "father" tends to transfer parental affection to the religious leaders.

The fixation of the eyes on the altar or the priest or religious leader.

The chanting and constant repetition of songs, hymns, or doxologies.

The kneeling in prayer, an act of submission.

The bowing of the head.

The closing of the eyes in prayer. The constant repetition of the inferiority of men, the depravity of men and that all were born in sin and that all are inferior.

The unusual clothing, robes, hats, jewels and other religious paraphernalia of religious leaders.

After several, or many years of such procedure, it is practically impossible for the religious masses, especially the weaker minded

portion, to break the hold with which their leaders have chained their minds.

Chapter Eight

Religion is Contrary to Reason

Most religious teachings are contrary to reason. We are told to believe that a god, who must look like a man, because a man was made in his image, made the world in six days. This god took some clay in his hand, molded it, blew on it, and a man was formed.

Science teaches that the world was formed as an offshoot from the sun, over a period of millions of years, and that man evolved through the ages from lower forms of life.

Religion tells us that Christ was born from a virgin. Reason teaches that this is impossible. The Bible says Christ made wine out of water. Reason denies such a thing is possible.

The Bible says Joshua made the sun stand still. Science and reason could not countenance for a moment such a fabrication.

The Bible says that God of the Jews cut the Red Sea in half and let the Jews walk between two walls of water. Science denies such a possibility.

There are hundreds of "miracles" reported in the Bible and thousands more in the traditions and writings of religious works.

All these miracles purport to set aside natural laws. The miracles are supposed to be phenomena which men are unable to do but which gods and supernatural beings can do. (Any modern magician can perform any number of tricks which people do not understand.)

No miracles in Christianity of any consequence have been reported during the last 1900 years. The farther away, and the longer time back in history miracles are reported, the less they are subject to investigation.

"Miracles" are for the purpose of "selling" the prospective convert the religion the "promoter" has to offer. It is a method of getting the "prospect" to sign up and join the religion. Those who head the religion or church usually are well paid for their work. After a few years

an organization is built up which tends to be self-perpetuating. All the "promoters" have to do is to keep talking. They toil not, neither do they spin, their "gift of gab" keeps them on the payroll.

Their arguments are always contrary to reason. The miracles they tell about are contrary to reason. The philosophy they propagate is not based on common sense, nor is it of practical benefit nor does it contribute to man's happiness.

On the contrary, the following of religious philosophies often is the greatest cause of unhappiness in a whole nation.

Chapter Nine

Science Disproves Biblical Stories

If the series of miracles and Biblical stories can be disproved, the whole Christian religion can be shown, like all other religions, to be merely the outgrowth of the distorted mental functioning of primitive people, shaped by self-seeking priests and preachers.

The Bible says God made the world in six days. A well-educated twelve year old school-boy now knows that the world is an offshoot from the sun and has been evolving for millions of years from a gaseous stage to a solid sphere. The Bible says birds, animals and fishes were "manufactured" by God in a few days. Science, by hundreds of years of research, shows that the growth of animals took millions of years to evolve to the present forms and that the higher forms evolved from the lower. The Bible says that Joshua made the sun stand still. Science proves that the sun does not move around the earth, which in itself is sufficient evidence that the story of Joshua is foolish, but science also shows that the whole solar system would have to stop if the earth stood still for a moment, and that there is no scientific record of either the earth having stopped whirling or the sun having shone an extra day. The Bible tells the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale and remaining in the whale's belly as a guest for three days and of his then being cast up alive. Science first says that whales could not swallow a man whole, that if he was swallowed, he would be digested in less than three days, that the man

would be suffocated within ten minutes without air, and that whales do not breathe air into their stomachs but into their lungs. The Bible says that Christ walked on the water. Science says that men are about the same weight as water and that while they can float partially submerged, they cannot walk without artificial assistance on water, although very salty water will float a man more buoyantly than fresh. The Bible says that Jesus was born without his mother having had sexual intercourse. Science says that this is not possible. Even though artificial insemination is possible, it was unknown at the time Christ's birth is claimed. And what difference would it make if Christ or anyone else were born without his mother having had sexual intercourse? There are insects which bring forth eggs without having had intercourse with males, and others once impregnated, such as bees and ants, lay eggs for long periods of time without further impregnation. But of what significance is it? There is no reason to believe that because of this condition they are more intelligent than if they were developed in the ordinary way.

A man should be judged by what good he does for mankind. We have the claims by four authors, more or less anonymous, that Christ was crucified and three days later arose from the dead. The four men who tell of this "event" conflict in their testimony. Matthew takes only a few words to tell of what was supposed to have happened after the resurrection. The others tell of Christ having appeared at various times and places to different people. But if he conquered death, why did he not remain and preach. Why did he leave so suddenly? After once having conquered death, he could have done so again easily. The story of the crucifixion and resurrection is unsupported by ordinary history and scientific evidence. As a matter of fact, millions of suckers, fools, and dupes still go to see the "Holy Sepulcher" in Jerusalem. They fight and kill one another to get to it and buy candles and offerings from the priests who become wealthy operating the so-called shrine. Now if Christ ascended into heaven, why would he have needed a sepulcher? Where has the reasoning capacity of the people gone? It has been suppressed by the churches, because they know that their arguments will not stand comparison with reason and they know that only by compulsion and ignorance can their profitable churches survive. Any student can go through the Bible and

find hundreds of conflicts between science and the Christian religion. An intelligent man can convince himself in a few hours of the true character of the foundation of the biggest money-making religion of all time.

Chapter Ten

Joshua and the Sun

According to the Bible, Joshua compelled the sun to stand still. Joshua, in Chapter 10, verse 12: "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon; and thou moon, in the Valley of Ajalon.' "

13. "And the sun stood still and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hasted not to go down about a whole day." No other part of the Bible should be required, to prove its complete unreliability.

All school children now know that the Sun does not revolve around the earth, The Sun, to all intents and purposes, has been standing still since the earth was formed. (Astronomers say that the whole solar system is moving, but that does not affect the relativity of the position of the Sun and earth) .

This claim proves that the writers of this part of the Bible were ignorant people and did not know that the earth rotates on its axis each 24 hours and that the Sun stands still. It proves that they knew less than the school children of today. It proves that the book could not have been inspired by an all-wise intelligent being because the claim that the Sun stood still is a false statement.

The Bible has been promoted by men as a book of divine revelation in spite of knowing that it is based on false claims and fables.

The Joshua story proves that the Bible was written by men without scientific knowledge.

If one story is wrong, the whole book can be wrong, because no supposedly divine revelation could be part perfect and part imperfect.

Either the originator of the story was a paranoiac, that is, insane and suffering from delusions, or he was a deliberate liar who told the story to impress his listeners.

It is evidence that the rest of the book can have either truths or falsehoods and opens all of it to doubt, and that each story or statement should be considered upon a basis of sustaining itself.

If the story of Joshua's stopping the Sun is false, that of Christ's resurrection may also be false.

The story can also be explained on a basis of a mistranslation, but if this story can be mistranslated, other parts of the same book can be in error by reason of mistranslation. Biblical believers always explain admitted falsehood, misstatements and scientific errors as being allegorical or poetical, and claim that although the Joshua phenomenon of the Sun standing still cannot be true, the story is only part of a poem to make a point of something else. Probably all false and erroneous statements of the truth can be so excused or explained - but the fact remains then that no one can be sure whether a story or statement in the Bible is true or false. Of what value is it to the average man, if it is admitted that certain statements are poetical fictions? One of the Bible apologists, R. A. Torrey, in explaining the story of Joshua commanding the Sun to stand still, apologizes by saying: "If God could make the universe, he could make the Sun stand still." He then further attempts to explain the passage, which every intelligent being knows is contrary to science and reason, by saying that the Bible translation is erroneous; that it would literally be translated—"Was silent"—"Keep silence"—"Be still"—"Held at peace"—"Quiet one's self"—"Tarry"—"Wait"—"Rest"—"Stayed"—"To stand"—"Stand up."

Following the custom of Bible apologists, who find that a Bible passage is contrary to science and reason, this man then falls back on the argument that the words used do not mean what they say. In other words, black is green, pink or yellow, but not black.

Torrey then divides the Heavens in half, and says the Sun stays in half of it all day. He talks about refractions of rays which, of course,

has nothing to do with the fact that the earth rotates on its axis and the Sun does not move.

He then further apologizes and attempts to explain that the words, "Be silent" mean that Joshua commanded the Sun to withhold its light, and that what occurred on this occasion was not a prolongation of the day, but a dark day, so that Joshua had the advantage of fighting in the night.

To a reasoning man, this attempt to twist the language of the Bible from telling of the Sun standing still twenty-four hours to make it appear that the night was longer is typical of those who attempt to lead ignorant and stupid people into believing the Biblical legend. The low degree of intelligence of those who blindly swallow such interpretations can be readily understood by any man with even a small degree of reasoning capacity. This fantastic explanation by a devout follower of the Bible indicates that even he understands that there probably was a great deal of mistranslation and if it was mistranslated one place, it could be mistranslated other places, and if one of the stories is false and mistranslated, much of the others could also be false and mistranslated, and if the myth of Joshua making the Sun stand still is false, then there is no reason for not believing that the story of the Jewish God and the Christian God is also false.

To summarize: The story is a falsehood, the writers of the Biblical history were ignorant, unscientific men and as such, are not worthy of belief in this or other matters. The book could not have been written as the divine revelation of an intelligent supreme being; it opens the whole book to doubt; it shows that the Bible conflicts with science; it proves that school children of today know more than the primitive writers of thousands of years ago; it proves that the believers and readers of the book have been ignorant or unreasoning men and that the promoters or leaders of the Christian religion are either stupid, if they believe the story, or hypocrites if they do not believe it and still promote the fable, and that in either case they are not the kind of people who can lead other people toward enlightenment.

Chapter Eleven

Religious Customs Are Stupid

Reason and intelligence prove that most religious customs are stupid and void of any benefit.

What benefit to humanity is there to pray before a statue, made of wood, stone or brass, as the Catholics do? What need of praying in a loud voice? If there were a supernatural all-knowing, all-seeing individual, what need would there be to pray to such a being? He would know everything without being prayed to. And consider the time it would take such a being to listen to the prayers of 400,000,000 Christians, praying day and night, to say nothing of considering such prayers and carrying out the desires of millions of people with different and conflicting prayers, one wanting it wet, the other dry, one cold, the other warm, and so on. And there are two billion persons on the earth. What about the prayers of the other 1,600,000,000? The Supreme God would have to take care of them also.

Then let any man make a few prayers and see how he comes out. If his prayers are granted, he may believe in prayer. If the prayers are not successful, then let him try other means to obtain what he wants. Let the average man ask any other average man what success he has had, and he will soon find out that all the answers to prayers are far away, or a long time ago, or a coincidence, and that the propaganda is mostly bunk. If prayer works, its value is so mysterious and intricate and indefinite that ordinary men can obtain no benefit from praying and it is a useless waste of time.

Of all the stupidity on earth, the religious system of dress is near the limit. Consider the orthodox dress of a nun. A long robe or dress, dragging on the ground, catching dust and filth. The same thing summer or winter. The intelligence of man, if it means anything, is for the purpose of taking advantage of conditions and improving everything for his benefit, comfort, and enjoyment. In warm weather, light colored, short, lightweight garments are the only sensible things to wear. And in cold weather, black and dark colors are sensible. The nuns wear a collar, "blindlers" to cut out light and sun and air. Long,

bulky, cumbersome sleeves, a nuisance and handicap when trying to do anything. A shaved head, skull cap and a heavy chain with beads. This uniform is not based on reason, sanity, or cleanliness. The poor nun-slaves wear the same kind of garments worn thousands of years ago. They have stood still while the world has advanced. They and their clothing belong to the Middle Ages. The robes of priests and preachers are similarly stupid.

For ages women were not permitted to wear pants because of baseless Biblical injunctions, and the same stupid taboo prevented them from cutting their hair.

These taboos are still in force in some Catholic countries and would be in the United States if the Catholics had their way. For centuries, women have carried a mess of dirty, hot, heavy hair, because some freak of a prophet had a brainstorm 5000 years ago, and the priests and preachers have enforced the rule as long as they could. Millions of hours which could have been put to better use have been wasted fooling with long hair. As a matter of fact, the whole system of dress seems to have been based on the Biblical paranoiacs' ideas of thousands of years ago. It was a sin to expose the body to the health-giving fresh air and sunshine. And the churches by law, up until a few years ago, forced women, when bathing, to wear long cumbersome bathing suits, stockings and other paraphernalia dangerous to life. The whole custom was opposed to reason and intelligence.

And then consider the case of the nuns in the first place. Why should any healthy young woman, be encouraged or forced to deny herself the pleasures of love and marriage and sex and a home, and be forced to live like a prisoner in a dark, unhealthy uncomfortable prison-like nunnery, doing mostly nothing but repeating parrot-like silly prayers, or stroking her rosary day after day?

The only thing we can say in favor of nunnery is that some of the individuals, by not having offspring, do tend to eliminate their type and thereby gradually to increase the percentage of intelligence. But on the other hand, they do so much work for the benefit of the religious institutions that this may outweigh the lack of propagation. Of course, the world would benefit if all these people were put to work doing something useful.

Our governments ought to try to educate these poor ignorant people as they do the so-called under-privileged, so that they will lead healthy, normal lives of usefulness to themselves and their country, instead of hollow wasted lives of melancholic mental emptiness.

It is unfortunate for humanity that marriage, mating, and love have all been under the unintelligent, superstitious control of religion and the religious rules and customs have been written into the laws of nearly all the nations. How far better it will be when superstition is removed from the minds of men and all such matters will be based on the results of scientific knowledge and investigation of the world's foremost biologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and those who have a desire to promote real human happiness and a better, healthier, more intelligent race of people.

The sex and mating urges are, next to the urge to survive, the strongest. Lack of intelligent control or direction of these urges has been the chief cause of crime, disease, insanity, wrecked lives, unhappiness, lack of efficiency in young people, and actual deterioration of many groups of peoples all over the world.

Experience has shown that the church-plan to force two people to live together all their lives when they are unsuited, incompatible, or when they change in their ways of living, has caused untold misery. Church practices calling for mothers to bear children as they can has been the cause of a multitude of weak, sickly children, leading unhappy, poverty-stricken lives, at a great cost to the taxpayers in maintaining public institutions for their support and treatment.

Children who are wanted and cherished by their parents, will never present the problems that a brood of hungry, unwanted, improperly cared for youngsters forced on the mothers of the more ignorant and religious groups will present.

The church has fought bitterly and solidly against the education of the people regarding birth control. In this, as in all progress or advancement, the church has opposed forward steps.

The parents do not benefit by an excessive number of children to take care of and the children do not have a fair opportunity to lead happy, useful lives. Of course, the churches get that many more customers and the more poverty stricken and ignorant their followers are, the better hold churches are able to keep on them. The parents

with leisure and the children with an opportunity for higher education do not feed the church coffers like the lower, more ignorant classes. It matters not how poor an excessive number of children might make the father, or how low the mentality of the parents, they are to breed like rabbits and fill the churches with cash customers.

The intelligence of the children and the parents and the nation can be increased where the parents are not slaves to the hunger of a great brood of little ones and where all have more leisure to study and develop their minds and bodies. Yet the priests still control the legislative channels which refuse the legal dissemination of birth control information. That the people do not approve of the priestly efforts to enslave them, is evident by the widespread use of birth control. Because of the freedom of those who have enough intelligence to use such information, the happiness, intelligence, and health of the nation has improved.

Mothers who are not forced through a continuous round of pregnancy, lactation, care of infants, care of children from one year to the next for 20 years, are able to give more attention to themselves, their husbands, the children they have, their homes, and their country. And the fathers are able to plan for earlier retirement, shorter hours, more comfort and luxuries for themselves and their families.

But the Catholic Church prefers to keep the hands of the clock stilled on the basis of 2000 years ago, and place the people of the United States and other countries on the same low mental plane as that of the earliest primitive peoples.

It is queer that the ideas on sex are enforced by nuns and monks and priests who are supposed to be celibates and who are suffering from the complexes and manias which modern psychiatry and psychology and psychoanalysis and other mental sciences tell us result from the unnatural suppression of the powerful, healthful sexual urges which are no more improper than the normal desire to eat, breathe and drink.

If there were a god, and he put the sex instincts in men, and then condemned mankind because he followed his instincts, we would think of that god as a demon who delighted in tormenting the children he made, just as a cat plays with a mouse.

Only the church has given the flavor of filth, sinfulness, and wrongness to sex impulses.

Let the priests and monks and nuns who use their influence to suppress birth control information go through the pangs and pains of too many childbirths without adequate care, without much hope for the future of a big brood of poverty-stricken youngsters, and they might change their minds as to the benefits of birth control.

Many priests and preachers live lives of ease, with little or no physical exertion or manual labor. They simply repeat parrot-like phrases and traditional stories. Their churches are free from taxes, they are free from military service, free from having to raise and support families (even if they do have illicit sex relations), and yet tell the rest of us what to do about family matters. In truth, it is the mother's and father's business how many children they want, and it is their right in a supposedly free country to get what information they want on birth control or on any other subject.

It is only by suppressing the free investigation by intelligent adults of religious matters that any religion can survive and exist among intelligent people, although the ignorant, moronic rabble evolved by and for the religious leaders will always exist to a considerable extent.

A traveler has said, "Poverty stricken India, a land of starving unfortunates, almost without a meat or dairy industry, feeds more than twice as many cattle as the U. S. Millions of old cows live on, eating food that is desperately needed by human children, but the cows and bulls are sacred, religiously protected, can neither be used nor eliminated, and they drop their manure in the markets and on the sidewalks spreading filth, stench and disease among the religious-ridden Hindus. Only their hides are used, after their death, and these may be handled only by the lower castes. Snakes, superstitiously venerated and protected by the priestly clan, annually kill many thousands of wretched Hindus. Such customs seem foolish to Christians, but eating the flesh of their "savior" looks foolish to non-Christians, and both customs are devoid of reason.

Chapter Twelve

Prayers Are Worthless

One of the least intelligent religious customs is that of prayer. It is customary for religious congregations to pray in a loud voice asking their god for favors.

If theirs were an all intelligent god, he would know what people wanted and what was good for them before they themselves developed the idea of asking for something.

As a general rule, people pray for things they expect to "chisel" out of the deity, that is, they pray for something for nothing. One group prays for rain, another group who feels that rain will injure their crops about to be harvested, will pray for a dry spell. Each man often wants something that will be at the expense of others.

Prayers are never answered and only now and then seem to be, by accident or coincidence. Religious believers often excuse the failure of prayers by saying that the praying was not made in good faith, or that the person praying was not entitled to the object prayed for, or that God, in his wisdom, did not care to grant the prayer.

Often there are wars in which many nations participate. All sides have conflicting interests and often all pray for victory which, of course, means the subjugation of other peoples and the conquest of their territory or treasure.

In many cases, such as World War II, the people in the Nations were divided. That is, the Communists in Germany would rather Germany lose the war, and the Fascists or Nazi-inclined French were more anxious to have the Germans win. The Jews in all countries wanted the Germans to lose. All of these people prayed for victory.

Victory in this war, as in all wars, went to the country with the most guns, the most money, and the best fighters, ships, supplies, generals and propaganda.

Each man should decide the prayer question for himself. Let him pray for what he wants. If he gets it, then let him believe in prayer - but if he fails to receive what he prays for, then let him consider prayer as merely a primitive custom handed down by primitive peo-

ple. In the Catholic church, prayer is considered to be more efficacious if done by a third party, a broker, agent or intermediary, normally a priest. Let the person praying with third party assistance also decide whether such prayers are fruitful. If they are, then he should keep on, but if they are fruitless, he should consider this means of obtaining results as worthless, and work and plan instead for the things he needs.

Chapter Thirteen

The Churches Supported the Cruel and Inhuman Practice of Slavery for Many Centuries

Like many other barbaric and vicious customs, the proponents of human slavery could always refer to the Bible as supporting their doctrine. Of all the evil things the world has known, the enslavement of human beings was probably the most diabolical. Men and women could be sold like animals or chattels; families could be broken up and scattered to bring the most profit to their masters, who were often cruel and inhuman. A slave had no rights of any kind. He could be beaten, starved, mistreated, or murdered to satisfy the whims of his master. It is impossible for any man with even a spark of justice to allow any defense whatever for this wicked practice.

Yet the so-called "book of divine revelations" from a supposedly all-just, supreme being condones the vicious practice, and for thousands of years the priests and leaders of the Jewish church - later the Christian church - never raised their hand against the system of slavery.

It was only when the minds of men, who believed in justice and liberty and rights for every man were able to prevail, that this horrible practice was abolished. During all their efforts the proponents of slavery loudly proclaimed that they were acting under the dispensation of God and they pointed to passage after passage in the Bible.

The Ten Commandments do not condemn slavery. Christ did not say one word against slavery, although there was a crying need for someone to raise a voice against terrible inhuman custom.

Not only did the churches not condemn slavery, for thousands of years religious institutions have owned slaves and profited from their work. Had Moses been fit to be called a man he would have made eleven commandments, one of them being "Thou shalt not allow slavery." Had Christ really had the interest of humanity at heart he would have preached against it, and had the churches been preaching since Christ's time against it, slavery probably would have been eliminated a thousand years ago, instead of continuing up until the bloody war of 1861-64, which extinguished it, except by tyrants such as Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

As a matter of fact, the so-called God of the Bible deliberately divided up the people in the land of Canaan as slaves among the Jews; that is, all except the people the Jews claimed God ordered them to kill. In the ninth Chapter of Joshua, it is told how, at God's request, the Gideonites were delivered to the Jews and condemned into perpetual bondage to them.

In Deuteronomy, God ordered the Jews, Chapter 20, verse 14: to "divide the women, children and cattle among themselves," while in the 13th verse He orders them to kill all the male inhabitants.

In Leviticus, 25th chapter, God commands the Jews regarding slavery as follows:

44: "Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids. .. shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

45: "For it is moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession.

46: "And ye shall take them for an inheritance for your children after you, and they shall be your bondmen forever."

Here is the case where God has given direct commands to the Jews to buy and sell not only adults, but children, as they would cattle.

Chapter Fourteen

The Bible is Full of Obscene, Vulgar, Lewd, and Filthy Language.

The Bible contains a great number of obscene, vulgar, lewd, filthy stories and references. To say the least, much of it would not be discussed by cultured and refined people in the way it is set forth in the so-called holy book. Exaggerated sex references are numerous. As a history and a fair portrayal of the life of the ancient rabbinical life of the Jews, these things can be considered as a sort of history, but as a holy book, the inspired work of an all powerful, all-loving, all-kind god, the Bible sets a poor example.

Some of the stories and verses in the Bible could not be sent separately through the mails without subjecting the sender to prosecution under federal statutes. It is strange that the same church elements who make the laws prohibiting the expressions of obscenity and vulgarity, consider the obscenities when written in the Bible as the holy word of their supreme being. Only religious people could be so inconsistent.

It would subject the writer and publisher of this book to prison terms to quote the Bible stories and phrases which prove the charge made in this chapter. The reader will have to decide for himself as to the truth of the charges made. We are indebted to Frank C. Hughes, of Squirrel Island, Maine, U. S. A., for a list of references to particular passages. Many more could be given but there is no need for it. It is suggested that each reader examine his Bible for the purpose of verifying the statements made.

Genesis 16:2.

Genesis 19:8.

Genesis 38:8 to 11.

Exodus 4 :24 to 27.

Exodus 22:18.

Leviticus 18.

Numbers 15:32 to 36.

Numbers 31:17 to 18.

Deuteronomy 15:12 to 18.

Isaiah 16:11.

Deuteronomy 21:15 to 23.

Deuteronomy 21:10 to 14.

Deuteronomy 23:1 and 2.

Deuteronomy 24:1.

Deuteronomy 24:5. I

Samuel 25:22 and 34. II

Samuel 16:21 and 22. I

Kings 1 :1 to 4. II

Kings 18:27.

Ecclesiastes 3:19 and 20.

Isaiah 36:12 - This is the same as II Kings 18:27 and shows the duplication, error and lack of proper compilation by the ancient priests who put the books of the Bible together.. Ezekiel 4:12 and 15. Malachi 2:3. I Corinthians 14:34 and 35.

Chapter Fifteen

Priests, Preachers, and Their Supporters Profit by Their Religion

How long would religion last if there was no special profit in it for those who carry on religious propaganda?

Millions of priests, preachers, bishops, nuns, sisters, monks, evangelists, and others of higher or lower degree derive their living from the religions they preach. Most of these people have very easy lives. They are usually fat and well kept, wear good clothes, and have special benefits.

They work together like a vast political machine. It is to their personal advantage to work for the religion which supports them. They toil not, neither do they spin, yet their religious followers support them in comfort and even luxury. Many a country has miserable shacks for the people who provide ostentatious and costly temples, tabernacles, and cathedrals for the leaders. Besides the easy living,

which priests and witch doctors have had from the earliest times, they have obtained many other special privileges.

They are exempt from the wounds and death of war; they are free from military duty. In this case we have another instance of evolution, the priests and their workers have always saved their skins while their followers were on the battle front. So naturally the priestly clan throughout the ages has survived in a larger proportion than the braver members of their congregations who have gone to war. The freedom from going to war is an advantage enjoyed only by women and priests, religious students and other church hangers-on. This in itself is a reason why many preachers and priests stick to their profession. During the Second World War more than 150,000 of these parasites escaped military service. Also, priests, preachers, nuns are entitled to special rates on the railroads, steamships, and other means of transportation which increases the cost to other travelers.

They receive exemption from taxes on their magnificent churches. Any man not having to pay taxes on his business would become wealthy beyond his dreams. It is the greatest overhead expense of any business or profession. Freedom from taxes permits the churches to continue to grow wealthier each year at the expense of the taxpayer.

During World War II, a Navy chaplain is said to have used the phrase, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," which among other things, shows that he had more confidence in bullets than he had in prayer. What he should have said was "Praise the Ammunition and Pass the Lord," as is quoted in "The Freethinker." But the most important clause in effect by the churches is "Praise the Lord and Pass the Collection Plate."

The priest hearing confession and the preacher in his religious duties are also able to meet under the most favorable conditions the most beautiful women and girls and that may also be a contributing factor to the reason for liking their jobs.

All of these advantages and probably many more which the priest and preacher possess over the common man are contributing factors to the continued growth of religious institutions in all parts of the world.

It is a decided personal advantage for them to keep on preaching. The leaders make it worth their while to keep at their work, and so down through the centuries, the churches have grown larger and richer; they have attempted to eliminate opposition and competition. And whether the leaders believed what they preached or not, they have lived more abundant lives than their followers. From this mechanical and selfish natural fact, as it were, they have gained momentum with geometrical ratio, the bigger they grow the more special privileges they have, and the more special privileges they have the bigger they grow.

However, the largeness of an organization does not make it right. There may be more Buddhists in the world than adherents of any other religion, but no Christian priest would admit that as proof that Buddhism is the right religion. By the same argument, there may be more Christians than atheists, but the fact that there are does not prove the Christian religion is right. There are many more stupid people than intelligent people, but that does not prove that the stupid people are the better. Mere numbers of believers do not have any weight as to the truth or benefit of any religion.

Nor does repetition of any prayer or religious practice prove that it is right. The only advantage to the promoters of the religion is to keep fixing in the minds of their followers things they want them to accept. If the repetition of religious slogans, prayers, or fables meant anything, the meaningless phrase, "om mani pan" of the Buddhists, which is tied to water wheels so it can be endlessly repeated by the turning wheel and which has been done for thousands of years in India, China, and the far East, would prove that it was the most important religious statement. But no Christian preacher would admit it for a moment.

As a matter of fact, those countries are poverty stricken and disease ridden, victims of plague, poverty, invasion and oppression. Using the argument that numbers of prayers count heavier, any Buddhist monk or priest could say that all of the prayers, slogans, liturgies, doxologies, and all other oral paraphernalia of the Christian churches were worth less, because the Buddhists were saying more prayers than were the Christians.

The conclusion must be that the size of the church, and the oral and written propaganda are all of more benefit to the religious leaders than they are of benefit to the truth or the following of the various religions.

Take the profit out of religion and it would soon perish.

Another great advantage to priests and preachers is that in most countries they are honored and respected and given high social positions.

This is a great satisfaction to most persons. Few priests and preachers are intellectual giants; they might be bartenders and ditch diggers, farm hands, and bakers if they were not connected with the church. They know this. They bask in the light of the church, and are not honored for their intelligence and research nor for their benefits to mankind. This basking in the limelight means much to most men. Religion is thus perpetuated and promoted because it reacts to the personal advantage of those individuals who promote and perpetuate it.

Chapter Sixteen

The Diversity of Religions Proves None is a Divine Revelation

A sensible God who wanted to be worshiped would have given each child a revelation as to what he wanted the child to do. The child would have had an instinct to worship God in a certain way, just as it has an instinct to eat, drink, breathe, procreate. There would have been no need of intermediaries.

If a child is born in China, is he to burn forever in hell because he follows the rituals of the priests of that country? There are thousands of religions, cults, and beliefs. If God is so impotent that he can't keep his own religion before the people, how can they be blamed for not following it?

And if the Jews, God's Chosen People, could not be led into his ways, with all the advantages he was supposed to have given them, what can be expected of the people who were not chosen. Each sect,

each cult, each religion claims it has the only true belief and that all others are spurious. Which one can be right? Every day a new religion or off-shoot of an old one, or a new sect starts with slightly differing rituals or beliefs. Which one is the true and only religion? The Catholic Church has been "modernizing" or changing its catechism - was it right before or now? A man inherits his religion - he is forced into it by his parents and his rulers and is not permitted to know any other. Everywhere churches discourage their followers from studying other religions.

I can well remember the old preacher in the Methodist Church where I received my Sunday School teaching, telling us in a sepulchral voice, "It is dangerous to inquire into the why and wherefore of the things of the Bible. A few years ago a young man going to college began to have doubts and to ask questions about it - he began to study and delve into these things - and that man became a great infidel - he was Robert Ingersoll." I was impressed, as I was only eleven or twelve years old, and while I didn't understand much about it, from the preacher's voice I gathered that being Robert Ingersoll must be a terrible thing. Years afterward, the statement struck me as being a foolish one to make before reasoning people. But the preacher knew his flock - elderly dotards, children, family-worn women, and smug business men who came for business getting. A reasoning man would have at once begun to doubt a religion which would not stand investigation. But the simple minded were scared from making investigation. (However, that church lost customers, was later torn down, the lot sold.) Later one of the preachers was imprisoned for sedition because he advocated the part of the philosophy of Christ about turning the other cheek and advised men not to go to war.

Another preacher, a Baptist, at the same time used the Bible to incite his congregation to war and the purchase of War Bonds. His church grew and prospered.

Like the animals and insects, these great numbers of cults and religions, composed of men of inferior intelligence, still far down the ladder of human evolution, have continued to fight and quarrel among themselves as to the merits of their silly, stupid beliefs, doctrines, rituals, and trivial differences. Some through ignorance, but many because their mentality and the mentality of the strain they

come from, and their descendants, will be too low for many ages yet to be able to reason. Only those whose reasoning capacity has not been "bred out" of them by evolutionary processes will be able to shake off the fetters of these many cults and creeds.

Many such cults and creeds originated from insane prophets, others are outmoded beliefs of savage and primitive people, all are stupid, impractical, false, and confusing. They are the outgrowth of the mental processes of the slow rise of man from the lower states. And they have been the major bar to progress.

Chapter Seventeen

The Bible Abounds with Discrepancies

The Bible contains a great many discrepancies which is not surprising in a book which resulted from the writings of rather ignorant people. There are bound to be discrepancies in stories written by different men in different parts of the world, at different periods of time. A good example of a discrepancy is ordinary gossip. Everyone knows how some simple little fact can be exaggerated and magnified by its repetition.

We would not expect to find discrepancies in a book revealed by a divine power. We would not expect to find four accounts, all differing, of the resurrection. It does not speak well of divine intelligence to have four differing accounts. These discrepancies in the Bible, when thoroughly investigated, are sufficient proof to those with a reasoning mind that it is an accumulation of various stories written by different and almost always anonymous authors at different periods of time. There doesn't appear to have been any general editorship of the documents and, as a matter of fact, the books of the Bible and the order in which they were placed was decided by vote by a number of priests and other Church leaders in the fourth century.

St. Matthew commences his book, or rather the book bearing his name with a long lineage of Jesus Christ. After this long list Matthew then states that Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost, in which case he would have had no ancestors on his father's side. Thus the ridicu-

lousness of the first part of the New Testament is apparent in the first few pages. Then Thomas Paine has called to our attention that Matthew 1-6 places Joseph, the husband of Mary, as a member of the 28th generation from David.

The book of Luke which also gives a genealogy of Christ - places Joseph as a member of their forty-third generation. This is a very serious mistake for a book which is supposed to be divinely revealed and infallible. Not only does the number of generations disagree, but the names of the ancestors are different and it would not appear that the same man could be a descendent of the different lists of ancestors. They are listed here so that anyone can readily see the discrepancy:

Genealogy, according to:

Matthew

- 1 Christ
- 2 Joseph
- 3 Jacob
- 4 Matthan
- 5 Eleazar
- 6 Eliud
- 7 Achim
- 8 Sadoc
- 9 Azor
- 10 Eleakim
- 11 Abiud
- 12 Zorobabel
- 13 Salathiel
- 14 Jechonias
- 15 Josias
- 16 Amon
- 17 Manasses
- 18 Ezekias
- 19 Achaz
- 20 Joatham
- 21 Ozias

Luke:

- 1 Christ
- 2 Joseph
- 3 Heli
- 4 Matthan
- 5 Levi
- 6 Melchi
- 7 Janna
- 8 Joseph
- 9 Mattathias
- 10 Amos
- 11 Naum
- 12 Esli
- 13 Nagge
- 14 Maath
- 15 Mattathias
- 16 Semei
- 17 Joseph
- 18 Juda
- 19 Joanna
- 20 Rhesa
- 21 Zerobabel

22 Joram	22 Zalathiel
23 Josaphat	23 Neri
24 Asa	24 Melchi
25 Abia	25 Addi
26 Roboam	26 Cosam
27 Solomon	27 Elmodam
28 David	28 Er
	29 Jose
	30 Eleizer
	31 Jorim
	32 Matthat
	33 Levi
	34 Simeon
	35 Juda
	36 Joseph
	37 Jonan
	38 Eleakim
	39 Melea
	40 Menan
	41 Mattatha
	42 Nathan
	43 David

Paine points out that according to this list, the average age of the father of each child in each generation would have to be twenty seven, which is of course a ridiculous assumption that all of the men of all of those generations would have been bachelors until they were 27. Especially is this true when Solomon had a house of several hundred wives and mistresses before he was twenty-one years of age. Paine continues: "So far from this genealogy being a solemn truth, it is not even a reasonable lie."

All this would indicate, as Paine has pointed out, an effort to build up, or manufacture, a list of ancestors to give strength to Christ's claim as the King of the Jews.

Another example of discrepancy occurs in the stories about Jesus being sought out by King Herod and his father having been warned by an Angel to carry him to Egypt for safety.

Luke mentions nothing of the flight into Egypt and expressly represents that no such flight occurred and he says in 3:40, "and the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. 41, Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. 42, And when he was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast." This indicated that Joseph did not take his son into Egypt and, to quote further from Luke, he tells of Christ having been circumcised on the 8th day, according to Jewish ritual, and of having been taken to the Temple, and of the prophetess, and the old man who was to look on him before his death.

John mentions nothing of the immaculate conception, nor the flight into Egypt. Luke 6:16, in listing the Apostles, says: "And Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor"—which shows that the story was written long after the event occurred, because if it was a day to day account of the happenings and had been so written at the time the Apostles were selected, Luke or whoever wrote the book of that name would not have known that Judas was later to have been a traitor.

Thomas Paine has called attention to another great discrepancy showing the Bible to be full of mistakes and written by ignorant, uneducated, primitive people who were not even able to add correctly. The error is in the second chapter of Ezra. The chapter tells of the children of Israel, who had been captured by Nebuchadnezzar and carried into captivity at Babylon, but who were later able to return to Jerusalem and Judah. The writer lists the children of Parosh, 2,172, and so on down the list. After having listed all the people by families he then says:

"The whole congregation was 42,360 in figures, but anyone who adds up the number of people listed in the Bible will find that the total is actually 29,618, or an error of 12,542." What certainty can there be in the Bible for anything?

In the 7th chapter of Nehemiah, verse 8, another list of families is given by Nehemiah of the same people, but this list adds up to 31,089 an error of 11,271, and the writer still claims that there were 42,360. There are many similar errors of addition in the Bible, as well as disagreements between different books and verses, and this indicates

that the book could not have been the divine revelation of a supreme being.

Another of the discrepancies which indicates that the book was carelessly written, copied by several hands, poorly revised, edited by incompetent and ignorant writers who probably pieced together fragments of old writing is the mess and duplication of the last 2 verses of II Chronicles and the first 3 verses of Ezra. They are practically identical except that the last verse of II Chronicles breaks off in the middle. Then the first verse of Ezra starts off and repeats the whole 3 verses over again except that in Ezra the 3rd verse finishes the thought broken off in the last verse of Chronicles. This garbled mess referred to by Paine certainly reflects the ignorance of the Biblical compilers and proves that the writing could not have been divinely inspired.

In Acts 9:7 it is said that those journeying with Saul of Tarsus to Damascus "heard the voice that spoke to Saul, but saw no man"; but in Acts 22:9 the story is different: "They that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." Now this is a case again, where in the same book, different stories are told, indicating the worthlessness of the testimony of the man who wrote the story and also his stupidity for not having read what he had previously written. This does not look like divine revelation. It is possible that Saul was struck by lightning, as some other people have been, and he was lucky to have escaped with his life.

What can any reader believe - that men with him heard the voice of Christ, or that they did not hear the voice of Christ? Both of the statements are in the Bible and both of them cannot be true.

In some parts of the Bible we are told (John 1 :18), "No man hath seen God at any time", but in Exodus 24:10, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and 70 of the Elders of Israel "They saw the God of Israel." Isaiah says (Isaiah 6 : "I saw the Lord."

In Exodus 34:5 the Bible says, "And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord."

6. "And the Lord passed by before him."

In Exodus 34:28, "And he was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights." In the third chapter of Exodus, God appeared to Moses, and

the whole five books telling the history of Moses' leadership of the Jews is full of conversations with God. In one place the Bible tells of God having shown Moses his hinder parts.

Here is a conflict between writers in different portions of the Bible - some of them never having seen the other parts, probably, for the reason that the various books which make up the Bible were written at different times, and it was only in the fourth century A. D. that all of the fragments were gathered together and, by decree of a congregation of priests and other clever leaders, declared one book a divine revelation.

Of course, it wasn't. It was just a mass of fables, traditions, songs, poetry, copies of letters (such as the Epistles), and various stories written by a crude, ignorant, barbaric race, emerging from the wandering nomadic stage into the glimmerings of civilization.

Chapter Eighteen

There is an Absolute Conflict Between Science and the Bible

The conflict of the Bible and science is so great that any educated man immediately discounts the Bible as the divine revelation of a supreme being.

There are two conflicting accounts of the formation of the earth, both given in Genesis. The Bible says that the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Science says that the earth was formed from the Sun, and if such is the fact there must have been plenty of light. Later, God commanded the beasts of the field and creeping things to be formed, but science shows that creeping things and beasts of the field did not originate at the same time; that millions of years transpired between the development of the lowest reptiles and the beasts of the field. Furthermore, according to science the development of the earth and all of these animals took many millions of years, all of which can be shown to any reasonable mind by fossils and the measurement of the layers of earth, or sedi-

ment laid down upon the original rocks by the action of lakes, rivers, and seas.

There are many primitive fables as to the creating of man, but the science of anthropology presents the only real evidence, and it shows that through eons of time, man evolved from lower creatures.

Astronomers can predict the day of eclipses of the Sun and moon hundreds of years in advance. They know exactly what time these events will occur. They are able to tell when the tides will ebb and flow and what the height of the tides will be. Their "prophecies" to use the Bible word for predictions, are exact and accurate and civilization depends upon them. Because of their exact measurements they have been able to predict that when telescopes were increased in power, other planets of this solar system would be discovered and their predictions were fulfilled by the discovery of the planet Uranus.

Contrast these exact predictions with the prophecies of the Bible, which are couched in incomprehensible terms including conflicting interpretations. Contrast the knowledge of scientists with the child-like Biblical story of the creation of the world. There is no ground in science for the story of the formation of a woman from a man's rib.

Chapter Nineteen

The Intricate Human Body is Not an Evidence of God.

The religionist who points to the human body as evidence of God, because of its wonderfulness, should look in the hospitals, the insane asylums, the prisons, to see how imperfect the human body is. Credit should be given the doctors, dieticians, nurses, and helpers in these institutions and at home, who work unceasingly to correct the deficiencies of the "God-created" man. Then let them look at cancer, syphilis, smallpox, cholera, and the host of loathsome, painful infectious diseases of the human body.

Let such a man then study the story of evolution of man as written by Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, and other great students and he will find that the wonderful characteristics of man and other animals are the result of a slow growth during millions of years of variations

which would adapt men and other animals to cope better with the cruelties and hardships of nature.

And let the religionist watch the man-made improvements in animals and plants by conscious, systematic, predetermined breeding processes and he will see plants and animals transformed to the most fruitful; some plants made strong, sour fruits made sweet, animals from hot countries adapted to produce in cold ones, disease ridden trees made disease resistant, prickly vines made smooth, small fruits made large, cows milk production increased from 1 gallon a day to 25 gallons a day, horses bred to double their speed.

But sad to say, the evolution of the human race is still slow, retarded by the widespread beliefs of the ignorant persons without the intelligence to perceive that they are misled by power seeking, self-appointed priest-representatives of manufactured god-demons.

Chapter Twenty

Religious Customs Are Amazingly Stupid.

The Chinese make paper replicas of houses, animals, utensils, tools, and burn them on the graves of their departed relatives, claiming that this transports them to the spirit of the departed who can thus use them in the spirit world. Similar customs prevail in the religions of many primitive races. But Christians deride these silly customs, and all sensible people know that it is childish and unreasonable.

But Christian customs are just as ridiculous. Eating pinches of bread and sipping wine or grape juice are supposed to give the Christian a taste of the flesh and blood of Christ - of course, the bread and wine must first be blessed by the priest or preacher, and by magic incantations and abracadabra, rigamarole and hocus-pocus. It is impossible for the Christian church to get away from the cannibalistic ritual of blood sacrifices, which is the tail end of the old primitive cannibalistic customs even now practiced by some savage tribes, of eating their enemies in order to partake of their valor and courageous qualities. The whole of religion is based on morbidity. Anything pro-

moting happiness is supposed to be wrong. The Christian religion has attacked sex and desire as one of the greatest sins. Catholic priests are supposed to be celibates, and nuns and monks are required to take an oath that they will never have sexual satisfaction. But this queer custom, once started never stops. Christians think it foolish for Tibetan Lamas to carve prayers into the wooden water wheels that turn in their rivers for power but Tibetans see Catholics as primitive for counting the Rosary. There is no logical explanation for these things. There is no reasonable explanation for the Christians' attitude toward sex, but it is well illustrated by the stories printed in the "London Freethinker" "A parson's daughter took up a position in a farmhouse, and, after a few weeks quit. Asked why, she replied: 'I cannot stay here any longer - the poultry are so disgustingly immoral!'"

Whole tribes of primitive people have been wiped out or nearly exterminated by the Christian missionaries' insane zeal for putting clothes on tropical tribes; men whose skins had been exposed to the healthy air and Sun from time immemorial. If god had wanted people to be prudes, why did he fill their bodies and minds with desire? If it was a sin to exercise sex desires, why did he not create man without sex organs? Why did he not make priests without them, as certain insects are so born? Or why does not the Catholic Church unsex all of its nuns, monks, and priests? The head-hunting tribes of Borneo require that a man must cut off some person's head, man or woman or child, before he can be called a man and marry. What a stupid custom, we think; no reason, no sense. How did it originate? Of course there are psychological causes which are not founded on reason, but once started such customs survive as long as there is a profit in them for someone. For example the strange and primitive ritual of baptism. Nothing more childish could be imagined. Why does the silly rite continue? Probably because the preacher or priest receives a fee every time he sprinkles a drop or two of water on a child's head.

On the battle field priests are supposed to rush to dying men and administer last rites. If they would put their efforts into trying to save these men from death their efforts would be more practical. When a man is unconscious what matter is it to him what mumbling some cleric makes over him?

Chapter Twenty One

The God of the Bible is a Monster

Murderous, viciousness, treachery, cruelty, deceitfulness, and arrogance are common characteristics of the Biblical God.

No man of good morals could be even a fraction as vicious, murderous, or vengeful as the Christian God, according to the book reputed to be His divine revelation.

Consider the story of Adam and Eve, God made them weak so that they would be tempted by a snake made by God, and then he cursed them forever for doing something which he had enticed their desire to do.

Men behave better than this. They forgive their children for mistakes they make and try to point out better ways of doing things.

God cursed woman and said, Genesis 16: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow in conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.

17: "And unto Adam he said: Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth; to the end thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread 'til thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

Here is a God who has made man as a plaything and then cursed him forever for having eaten an apple. Could any more revengeful spirit be imagined? From then on, starting with the God-created Cain who murdered his brother Abel, God punished men and threatened them with "seven-fold vengeance."

God permitted them to do the things that were wrong, then in revenge he told Noah that he would destroy all by the horrible method of drowning. It would have been much easier for a supreme intelli-

gence to change the people so they would follow the regulations he gave them.

But in the destruction of the people, God also destroyed animals and the innocent babies, children, women, who had done nothing wrong or if they violated rituals or regulations, did so unknowingly. Is this the God of loving kindness that we hear preachers talk about?

Of course, the fable of the destruction of all of the animals by the flood is in conflict with science, as is the story of the earth being flooded at one time and, as a matter of fact, the fable is a tradition of a primitive people with childlike minds.

Other evidence of the revengeful spirit of God is the confounding of the languages of the people set forth in the story of the Tower of Babel. An intelligent being would have preserved one language, if there ever was one, so that all people would understand each other better and with the better understanding there would be less opportunity for war and bloodshed; much of which results from a lack of understanding caused by the defects of language, race, and religion. One of the greatest ideals of those who wish to see mankind reach perfection is a universal language; yet here we have a God, all powerful, vengefully causing just the opposite.

Of course, according to science, the reason for the thousands of languages is the wide dispersion and the great diversion of the various races, clans, and tribes of mankind. With little intercommunication, and with the gradual dispersion from centers of origin, the tribes lost contact with one another and languages became different; people became less able to understand each other; until after many centuries, with the development of writing and civilization, languages tended to become more universally used and some dialects were consolidated.

Almost invariably, wars are between peoples who speak different languages, and had the God manufactured by the ancient primitive peoples had the intelligence of the modern, well educated man, instead of confounding the languages he would have simplified them to avoid war and bloodshed.

What would one think of a man who showed special favoritism to the Jews, being but one tribe of the many nations and tribes he had created? And, by the way, this promise of favoritism to the Jews has not been fulfilled for they have been persecuted more than any other

race on earth. The second book of the Bible is a history of their having been driven out of Egypt; and they have been driven out of country after country, exiled, killed in pogroms, forced to live in ghettos and maligned down all the pages of history, from the time of the Book of Exodus.

God's instructions to the Jews to take the land away from the Canaanites who had not done them any harm, and to murder all men, women, and children, is one of the most sordid stories of viciousness and cruelty in all the pages of history. And as is reported in Deuteronomy 3, 33: "And the Lord, our God, delivered him before us; and we smote him and his sons, and all his people.

34: "And we took all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed the men and the women and the little ones of every city. We left none to remain." How can any person worship a God who would order the destruction of innocent women and children?

In Deuteronomy 3,6: under God's orders the writer boasts: "And we utterly destroyed them as we did unto Sihon King Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city." Only a monster could order such destruction.

The intolerance of the Biblical God is the extreme of jealousy, and in the 13th Chapter of Deuteronomy he gives express orders as to the method of murdering worshippers of other gods as follows:

10: "And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die." And further, verse 15: "And thou surely shalt smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword."

There are some human beings who become insanely jealous and murder other human beings, but seldom is the peak of vengeful jealousy reached where they would kill the innocent cattle or animals of the men they hated. And again in Deuteronomy 17, 5: is the further order that worshipers of other gods are to be stoned to death.

The peak of the vicious orders of the murderous Biblical God is reached in Chap. 21, verses 17 and 18 "But of the cities of these people which the Lord, thy God, doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth - "But thou shalt utterly destroy them: The Hittites and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the

Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord, thy God hath commanded thee."

Here we have this God creating people, ordering them to increase and multiply, and then taking people like the Ancient Jews who have a Biblical history of suspicion, greed, murder, internal dissension, violations of their God's commands, and ordering them to cruelly exterminate another race of people created by the same God.

And then in Chapter 21, verse 13, God orders other certain cities to be treated as follows: "Thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword"

14: "But the women and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoils thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord, thy God, has given thee".

15: "Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations."

Here we have the God of creation ordering the murder of all of the men and the enslavement for obvious purposes of the women, and the captivity of the children.

Is it any wonder then, that Thomas Paine says: "When we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than one half of the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent if we would call it the word of a demon instead of a god. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel."

It is no wonder then, that for thousands of years the Jewish Christian religion has activated men, rulers and church leaders to engage in the most frightful and bloody wars between Christian nations and between various sects and branches of the Christian church. Whole countries, tribes, cities, have been destroyed. They have exterminated, persecuted, and tortured all those who opposed their doctrines. It made no difference whether there was a difference of opinion the basis of which, in both cases involved in the dispute, was claimed by the proponents to be founded on the exact command and wording of the Bible.

All of those responsible for the wars, murders, persecutions, tortures, or burnings of those who differed with the religious leaders in power could readily be excused by quoting some part of the Bible, like Moses and Joshua's extermination of the Canaanites and the peoples nearby. They could all claim they had God's word for their cruelties, treacherous murders, and wars.

Had the Bible or a book with the same influence been filled with the stories of justice and fairness and the commands of a god who showed no favoritism, no cruelty, no intolerance, no hatred and no vengeance such as fills to overflowing the present Bible, mankind would have been thousands of years advanced. Had the Bible followed the thoughts and plans of the foremost thinkers of modern times, it is hard to say how much greater the advance of civilization would have been.

If the Bible were filled with stories of purity and the highest morality, and if there were no conflicts in it, no discrepancies, and if its predictions were exact and easily understood, then we might consider it as having been divinely revealed.

During all this history of the destruction of the Canaanites, the Jews made no converts, they made no efforts to convert the so called sinful people, whose lands they took, to their religion. They mercilessly and boastfully exterminated everyone, men, women, and innocent children, reserving only, for their own use, some of the virgins.

A god with supreme power would seem to have better carried out his objectives by changing the minds of the people to follow his commandments, rather than by exterminating them.

The morality of any so-called supreme being is open to question if he subjects innocent children to torture and death. The Biblical admonishment that "the sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children unto the third generation" is contrary to all justice and right. No intelligent person with modern, ethical ideals could possibly conceive of any justice in the innocent being forced to suffer by reason of the action of someone else.

In the book of Judges, the story of the murder of the people of Laish by the Danites, under the express orders of the Biblical God, is another case of extreme cruelty. This is a story of sending spies to the

City of Laish, finding that the people were quiet and secure, then smiting them with the edge of the sword. Let us give a parallel example: At the present time there is a New York negro calling himself Father Divine, who, according to Maurice S. White, in his booklet "Religions of the World," was born George Baker. Father Divine claims to have several million followers - negro and white. Suppose that he discovered that there was another city, for example, Philadelphia, in which the people were largely Quakers, and that he would order his followers treacherously to murder and exterminate all of the inhabitants of Philadelphia and to steal the property and land of the people who lived there. Here was a people who had done no damage or harm to Father Divine's New York followers, who believed him to be God.

These are exactly the kind of commands that the Biblical God gave the Jews; that is, they were to fall upon, murder, and exterminate whole cities, towns, and tribes of people whom they hardly knew and who had never done them any harm. Then they were to walk in and take the lands and the cattle and the property of the people they had murdered.

Let us continue our examination of the cruelties of God's chosen people.

In the second book of Kings, tenth chapter, is the story of how Jehu murdered the seventy sons of Ahab by beheading them: "Lay them in two heaps at the entering of the gate."

"So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreal, and all his great men and his kinfolds, and his priests, until he left him none remaining."

Later, "And he took them alive and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, two and sixty men; neither left he any of them."

17: "And when he came to Samaria he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him according to the saying of the Lord."

20: "And Jehu said, 'Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal.'"

24: "And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings Jehu appointed four score men without and said, 'If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.' "

The twenty-fifth verse tells how this treacherous fiend, acting under God's command, murdered these worshipers who had been invited to appear at their temple, and then in verse thirty we have the Lord's commendation for this heinous crime:

"And the Lord said unto Jehu, 'Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thine children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' "

And on through all of the books of the Old Testament are these stories of murder, killing, treachery, debauchery, robbery, and the destruction of innocent people, the murder of children and the capture of virgins for use of the Jews - all under the express command of the Biblical God.

In the fifteenth chapter of the second book of Kings is the story of how Manahem smote Tiphseh and, "All the women therein that were with child he ripped up." And we are asked to believe that the Biblical god ordered such inexcusable and unparalleled cruelty and barbarism. The so-called prophet Elijah was supposed to be a man of God, and he is typical of the reflection of God's mentality. Because some children referred to Elijah as "bald-headed," as children will:

"He turned back and cursed them in the name of the Lord, and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare sixty and two children of them." Is this not a fine example of God's treatment of his children? And of the unparalleled vindictiveness of one of his "men of God."

From this extreme of cruelty and murder of innocent people, other parts of the Bible, written by different men and at different times, swing to the other extreme and Jesus Christ is quoted as having told his followers to "love thine enemies," and "whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

Verse 44, Matthew, Chapter 6:

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Here we have two conflicting systems of philosophy: one, the murder of innocent people at God's command, and two, the docile submission and prostration before one's enemies. Christ is supposed

to be a part of God, and he gives opinions different from those given by the Holy Ghost or the other indivisible part of the Trinity.

But that is not all. At no time is there any mercy shown the innocent bystanders. Consider the case of Christ's casting the devils out of a man and putting them into a herd of swine, causing them to run over a cliff, to their death. What harm had the swine done to Christ or the man who was reported to be full of devils? The owner of the swine is not considered at all. Why should he be forced to lose his hogs because someone he probably never knew had fits?

Of course, during the time that the Bible was written, people knew nothing of psychology or psychiatry, and they believed that any man who showed signs of insanity or epilepsy was possessed with devils or foreign evil spirits.

But here, again, we have a conflict with Christ's own so-called philosophy, which has been the cause of the shedding of the blood of untold thousands of innocent people.

For in Matthew, chapter 10, verse 34, he says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace but a sword.

35: "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.36. "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

37: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Here we have again, the intolerance and the cruelty and the persecution of the Biblical God. Christ has ordered sons to be against fathers and has boasted about bringing a sword instead of peace. And perhaps this is one of the prophecies that is better fulfilled than any of the others, for down through the nearly twenty centuries since Christ is supposed to have been born, the sword, murder, and persecution have been instruments by which Christianity has been spread. We have the early four hundred years of war between the various Christian sects. We have the spread of the Catholic church by means of the sword and we have the burning of those who did not agree with the priests in power; burning at the stake, the murder of old

women who were called "witches," the destruction and slaughter of the Mexicans and South Americans by the conquistadors who carried a sword in one hand and a cross in the other. We have the history of the Inquisition and the persecution and destruction of millions of innocent people, the extirpation of the Huguenots of France, and the war between various parts of the so-called Holy Roman Empire, and the leaders of each one of these groups could always quote Jesus Christ for an excuse to carry on the warfare, persecutions, and cruelties that have set the world back thousands and thousands of years.

Take, for example, the Biblical command in Exodus, chapter 22, verse 18:

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

Thousands of innocent women have been tortured and burned at the stake to satisfy the sadistic enjoyment of priests, preachers, and even the Puritans of America.

It was probably an easy way for gossips to get rid of old women who knew too much, or for men to get rid of their mothers-in-law, or even possibly for the county to get rid of taking care of old women who were not able to work any more. Even during these times, the Eskimos leave their aged parents on the ice to freeze after their period of usefulness has passed: when the old women's teeth have worn down so they can't chew seal skins any more to soften them. What a wonderful spirit of loving kindness we have set before us by these Biblical stories and commands!

Chapter Twenty Two

The Churches Must Have Political Support in Order to Prosper

The churches are continually asking for more aid from the State - they want the children carried to their schools in publicly paid buses. They fear public education, and want the state to support wholly or partially, their parochial schools. Every effort is made to keep a hold on the children, to restrict by law the teaching of modern scientific theories such as evolution.

Most churches try by law, and they have succeeded in backward states, to make people live up to religious doctrines, such as observing Sunday. Always they decry the atheist, the unbeliever, and the free-thinker.

They boycott newspapers, magazines and bookstores where freethought literature is sold.

Their representatives are hired to serve at public expense in the legislatures, in Congress, and in the armed forces. No atheist can have a paid representative in these places and men are sometimes forced to go to church in the Navy and some of the military branches.

If religion was not compulsory, and not subsidized, it would not grow so strong. Place reason and religion on an equal footing and religion would fall by the way, that is, if atheists were permitted to have freedom from taxes, and had representatives in the armed forces and the legislatures, and were able to pass laws providing for no favors toward church doctrines (such as the Sunday laws), and the arguments for atheism were permitted, as religious programs are, to be broadcast over the radio, then religion would lose, in spite of the low mentality of the people.

Religion depends upon the unsheathed sword of political power and the suppression of opposition, for success. Exposing it to the light of truth destroys its power and influence.

Chapter Twenty Three

A Sensible God

A sensible god, all-powerful and all-good, would have made a world for human beings with no wars, no sickness, no dishonesty, no killing, no crime, no noxious insects, no sorrow, no trouble, no worries, no earthquakes, no poisonous snakes, no animals nor men tearing one another to pieces. All would have been peace and quiet, happiness and enjoyment.

The priests have built up a fabulous monster who delights in making men sinful and then punishing them with eternal torment in hell for their so-called wrong doing. What man would want to punish

his enemies forever and ever? Of course, the truth is that the original priests or religious leaders knew that there was no such thing as a god, and they built their monster on the basis of their own imaginations. The god they talk about is a god who will send to hell anyone who has the intelligence and courage not to believe in the priests' fables.

Naturally the priests want people to do as they say and the way to get them to do it is to threaten them with eternal torment after death. The priests could not demonstrate their God by having him strike unbelievers dead, so they had to reserve punishment for the atheists until after death. No one returned to say that they had not been punished and many people were impressed by the claim that they would be sent to hell.

Any church follower could see that good men suffer and criminals prosper. So the only thing the priest could say was, "Just wait until they die, then they will suffer."

Good men can only look forward to happiness in heaven, because usually they are robbed while alive. And the priest fills his pockets at the expense of the believing fools, who want to stand on the right side of their religious leaders while alive, and on the right side of the God-Demon after death.

Chapter Twenty Four

Daniel Being in the Lion's Den, if True, was no Miracle.

Religionists make much of the story in the book of Daniel, about his having been thrown into a den of lions and having escaped unhurt. If the story is true, there is nothing unusual about such a thing.

There are in every circus, men, women, and even young girls who are lion tamers, and not only stay in the cage with these so-called savage beasts, but actually make the animals perform at their command.

Chapter Twenty Five

Miracles of Healing and Magic

The proponents of the Christian religion profess to prove the truth of their doctrine by citing the miracles of healing and other so-called miracles as evidence.

But all religions, Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan, Greek and Roman, Japanese, Buddhist, all of the Hindu religions, also claim miracles and claim even more than the Christians do. They usually refer to miracles that have happened in far away places at far away times, but also demonstrate magical miracles in front of the eyes of the spectators, such as walking on fire, putting skewers through their flesh which does not bleed, and practicing self hypnotism which gives them extra strength for similar acts.

The Christians can no more prove the veracity of their religion by the recitation of miracles and the appearance of gods and spirits and the voices of such beings, than the other religions can prove their case. The difficulty of discerning the truth for the average Christian is that he does not understand the methods of religions.

It is safer to report a miracle that happened thousands of years ago than it is to tell of something that can be investigated by the listener.

If he could read all the stories, and hear the priests of all religions, and see the rituals of each, as well as understand the expose' of the so-called miracles, he would conclude that all were believed because of the still low mentality of men.

Many so-called miracles, the healing of minor mental and physical ailments, are the direct result of hypnotism. Psychiatrists understand how to talk to a patient suffering from mental ills and how to remove depressing mental aberrations from his mind. Others, experts at hypnotism and suggestion, can make people do things requiring abnormal strength. This often accounts for the so-called miracles of ancient and present times. All races and all religions claim to have God power, but the truth is that these things are done by mental suggestion.

Hypnotized men can be made to act like animals, stick pins in their flesh, stiffen themselves like boards, and do other strange things they are told to do by the man who has them under his spell.

There is nothing divine about this. There are many well written books on the abnormal behavior of men, which explain the phenomena.

But in ancient times, neither hypnotism nor insanity was understood, and crazy people were thought to be possessed by devils. They had complexes and sometimes, by properly talking to them, they could be shocked out of their insanity. Those who had heard of miraculous cures already had given themselves autosuggestive assistance when they went to be cured of a mental ailment.

Christ is reported time and time again to have shown his "power" which may have been hypnotic power. Those who were able to hypnotize, were considered divine - unless they interfered with the priests' or rabbis' business, in which case the established religious leaders strove then, as they do now, to eliminate competition and opposition, and therefore called the men "false prophets" and the women "witches."

All of this so-called "miracle working" was and still is practiced by charlatans on ignorant peoples of low mentality.

Chapter Twenty Six

The Bible Incites Men to Crime

The Bible tells a long history of vengeance, bloodshed, dishonesty, threats, hatred, murder, violence, rape, slavery, and misery.

The New Testament is full of morbidly conflicting philosophies of resignation, animosity, intolerance, threats of hell fire, unhappiness, opposition to natural enjoyment, and self imposed poverty.

The promise of redemption from sin, and the practice of the Catholic Church, of relieving those who have committed crimes from suffering for their acts, is conducive to crime.

Satan, a perfect angel turned criminal, was ejected from heaven but is still powerful enough to give God a good tussle, and he leads

man to a life of crime. If God were all powerful he could put the devil in hell and stop all this nonsense.

For eating a forbidden apple, the God-Monster condemned Adam and all his descendants to a life of unhappiness and eternal hell fire and torture.

The Christians claim that only after Christ had been murdered could people be saved, and then only by accepting the Church ritual without question.

What criminals God created! Satan, then Adam and Eve, who were disobedient, then Cain who killed Abel, then later, because men were criminals, God drowned them all except Noah and his family, apparently venting his wrath upon all the animals too; drowning the innocent with the guilty. Chapter 7, Verse 21, Genesis: "All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast and creeping things and the fowl of heaven, and they were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only, remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

All innocent children, innocent women and old people, all kittens and puppies and little animals, all doves and birds and bees and butterflies were exterminated to satisfy the blood lust of the god who had created them as they were.

Is this kindness, justice, love, righteousness? What harm could these creatures have done that they should be cruelly drowned?

And that was not enough. After the extermination, Noah still sacrificed his few remaining, precious animals. He "burned every clean beast and every clean fowl - and the Lord smelled a sweet savour" and said to himself he would not destroy man again. Only a fiend could be happy by the burning of animals for the odor of their cooking flesh. What crime had the clean beasts committed that they should be roasted?

But God was not long satisfied with the men he had promised to spare. Torture and punishment were again in his mind. The people spoke one language. But he confused them at the tower of Babel, with the result that forever after there has been confusion, misunderstanding, war, conquest, extermination, slavery, rape and robbery. Had God left them but one language, how much easier it would have been for him to have the Gospel preached to them. Then in the story

of Lot, his wife was turned into a pillar of salt just because she looked back on the city where she had lived. What an act of kindness!

In the 17th Chapter of Genesis the rite of circumcision was ordered - a form of torture, like the custom of savages in making holes in their ears and lips. It was a sacrifice or torture for the benefit of God.

What a delightful person Abraham was, to have received God's blessing. When his wife Sarah had passed the age of childbearing, he used her handmaiden, Hagar, who bore a son. When later, Sarah recovered her powers and bore a son, she was jealous of Hagar and God ordered Abraham to kick Hagar out into the wilderness. This is a fine example of domestic faithfulness.

Then God ordered Abraham to burn his son as a sacrifice - releasing him at the last minute. What a fiend ! But the blood hungry God still demanded the blood of something, so Abraham was ordered to take "a ram caught in the thicket by his horns, and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." An innocent animal tortured and burned for the pleasure of a monstrous God. No wonder there were Jews were a cruel, heartless people with such a God as their ideal.

Then we have Jacob gaining Isaac's blessing by deceit. Trickery is looked upon as cleverness by the Biblical God and the men who were favored by him. By deceit, did Simeon and Levi kill men of Hamor and Schechem and steal their cattle. Moses and God together are reputed to have brought the seven plagues and pestilences to Egypt, on young and old, innocent and guilty alike. Revenge, punishment, rapine, murder and thievery fill the history of Moses. But why should God punish bad men by killing innocent children? They always suffer the most from famine and pestilence. Why not kill the guilty and let the innocent live? That would have been the way to a better world.

God's jealousy is well shown in the ten or sixteen commandments, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." What a revengeful hatred! Not satisfied with ruining his enemies, he is like family feudists who murder whole generations of the families of those against whom they have a real or fancied grievance. They have the commandments as an example. If God could exact revenge on the third

and fourth unborn, innocent generations for failure to worship him, what blame can we attach to feudists who follow his example?

How could God tell the Jews they should not steal, kill, commit adultery, bear false witness, and then order them to sacrifice innocent animals, murder the peaceful Canaanites, rob them of their land and cattle and rape their virgin daughters?

For in the Book of Joshua, God ordered spies sent into Canaan and ordered Joshua to kill the inhabitants thereof, "and they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there were not any left to breathe...".

But still God demands murder, crime, bloodshed. The Jews who were his chosen people were enslaved, and as related in the book of Judges, were delivered to cruel masters.

Samson is betrayed by his wife, and murders her people, being in turn killed himself.

Then we have the beautiful story of David, God's chosen beneficiary and a man viewed as exceedingly wise by the Jews. What kind of man is he? In the second Chapter of II Sam., the sordid story is told of his walking on the roof at night and seeing a beautiful naked woman bathing. He found that she was the wife of Uriah, "And David sent messengers and took her; and she came in unto him and he lay with her, for she was purified from her uncleanness; and she returned unto her house; and the woman conceived; and sent and told David, and said I am with child. And David sent to Joab, saying send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David, and when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered." The childish, tedious Biblical language need not be repeated here, but in Chapter II, Verse 15, he tells Joab to "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die," and Joab carried out the sordid crime. Uriah was killed and thus David, the elect of God, covered the adultery and wife stealing by a cleverly concealed murder. Uriah, the only decent one of the group, was killed. God showed him no mercy. The wife was a party to the crime, so was Joab, David the instigator, and God, a silent partner; and the Jewish rabbis who wrote the tale did so in such a fashion as to give David credit for being a smart man. This example and the lack of

punishment, has probably instigated many similar crimes. No wonder that David continually praised God because he believed that God helped him in his schemes and crimes. David says, "I have kept the ways of the Lord - therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness."

So David killed animals or burnt them alive to please God and by doing these things: "So the Lord was entreated, for the land the plague (another threat of God) was stayed from Israel." The bloodhungry God threatened famine, pestilence and trouble but was appeased by the killing and burning of innocent animals.

And, with all humanity, they were declared guilty by God, condemned to eternal hell fire, then redeemed by the killing in a horrible manner, of God's own son. Blood, crime, murder seem to please God above all else, even the murder of his own son who was supposed to be the best man that ever lived; and whose death has been advertised as the most pleasing sacrifice God ever had made, to him.

The promise of life after death and the opportunity of Catholics to "purchase" by penitence (and cash offering), relief from crime, have been some of the most prominent factors in the continuous crime wave which has followed Christianity since its beginning.

These stories taught to children must have a bad effect on their subconscious minds.

David, the elect of God, was a sensual old man. "When he was stricken with years" they sought a virgin to lie with him. A disgusting proceeding for a young virgin to have to be a concubine for this old reprobate. She was not consulted, of course.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, was another rascal of the same breed, having inherited his ability from his father, David. The Jews and Christians have touted Solomon's wisdom for thousands of years. The Bible says of him "And King Solomon shall be blessed and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord forever." (Remember, David, the seducer and murderer, was the alleged ancestor of Jesus Christ.)

God "appeared to Solomon the second time" and promised him protection and prosperity. And Solomon "loved many strange women and he had 700 wives, princesses and 300 concubines."

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, even as the sand that is on the sea shore." What a magnificent God! "For he (Solomon) was wiser than all men"

With 700 wives and 300 concubines? Certainly an inspiring example for preachers who seduce their choir girls and secretaries and the sextons' wives.

Jehu, another of God's elect, massacred whole families. The two tribes of Israel waged war against each other. Amaziah slew 10,000. The two tribes fought until they were so weakened they became an easy prey to the Assyrians, this, under the supervision of the sadistic monster-God who seems to enjoy such entertainment.

In II Chron., Chapter 21, Jehoram murders his brothers, and the Lord smote Jehoahas with an incurable bowel disease. This was a magnanimous act for an omnipotent God to do, "and it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness, so he died of sore diseases." No wonder the Catholic Church had the pretext for the cruelties and tortures of the Inquisition from the Bible itself. Poor Jehoahas was only 32.

"Uziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." But the Lord could not control him and Uziah objected to an action of the priests and the Lord smote him with leprosy. These stories are probably for the purpose of showing that those who do as the priests want will prosper and that those who disobey will suffer. Ethics, morality, honesty, and fairness have no bearing on the success or prosperity of the Jewish rulers of the Old Testament.

God played with poor Job like a cat with a mouse - he tortured him with worries, even descending to torture him with boils, testing his ability to bear pain. Here we have omnipotence, with millions of people to look after on this earth alone, to say nothing of other worlds and all the other animals, besides the dead in hell and the dead in heaven, amusing himself by plaguing a poor old man with boils to see how much he could stand. This record in the Holy Bible is said to be a divine revelation from God! Job was a good man. He appealed to God, and finally God let him live 140 years after his years of torture and plague.

The Bible, purported to be the history of the world, is full of tales of wars, slavery, misery, pestilence, and plagues which are visited on

God's chosen people. The best evidence is in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and other prophets, but it is in every book and on every page.

To repeat them all would be to reproduce the Bible, so we will mention just the headlines of the Biblical chapters:

Jerusalem to be punished - but not destroyed.

The people terrified, but not ashamed.

God's message accused Israel of desertion.

Judah worse than Israel - both urged to repent. Israel to be scourged, purified, and restored.

God promises Zion blessing and prosperity.

Jerusalem to be ravaged.

The teachers of the people have misled them.

God would not listen even to Moses or Samuel.

Judah to be scattered, but later restored.

Jeremiah beaten and put in the stocks.

God renews the promise of the branch.

Zedekiah captured and Jerusalem burned.

Gedaliah murdered - Johanan avenges him.

The doom of Babylon - Utter destruction.

(Thus God destroyed Jerusalem, the City of His Chosen People, and showing no favorites, also destroyed Babylon, the City of the enemies and captors of His Chosen People.)

The misery of the Jews.

Israel under sword, pestilence, and famine.

How could God expect the people to believe in him when they suffered all these disasters, at the same time as they were praying to him to help them?

If the prophets who had talked with God did not believe in his doctrines, how could those of us who have not had the benefit of personal instruction be expected to believe in him? And if God treats the Jews, his chosen people, who had been persecuted from the beginning of history, as he does, what can the rest of humanity expect from him ?

Any psychologist will explain that the reading of books and stories on crime, and the glorification of the criminals cannot but help develop a crime complex in the young and lower classes of men.

Dr. Rufus King Noyes, in a brilliant address some years ago in Boston, said, "God killed prematurely 5,000,000 witches. Whom could those alleged witches blame? They could only blame God for God made them." Nowadays people do not believe in witches. But the Biblical record is full of them, the witch of Endor even having had royal customers. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," the Bible commands us, and millions of innocent old ladies have been burned alive in Europe and some even in the United States.

It is possible that the Jewish rabbis did not want any competition from witches, who were supposed to be female wizards, but with the murder of innocent old ladies, only crime and hatred could be engendered in the hearts of the families of those so exterminated.

Dr. Noyes reminds us that God is the arch criminal of all time. He caused the murder of millions of Jews, Gentiles, Canaanites, assorted tribes, nations, and all the people and animals of the world in the flood. He has used fire, earthquake, volcanic eruption, floods, cold, heat, and tidal waves to destroy millions and millions of innocent people who tried to exist as created by God.

He could have changed them after they were created instead of murdering them. Thus God, with his criminal instinct, has created man in his own image, hence man could not be expected to be anything but a criminal. All the wicked murderous men of the Bible were exalted. Exalt Solomon, call him the wisest of men, yet polygamy is wrong and criminal.

Jesus was undoubtedly daft - his own brother and neighbors held that he was 'beside himself'. Insanity was not understood. They concluded narrowly, that inordinate ambition, extravagant pretenses and unaccountable conduct was a sign of inspiration and indicative of kinship with God. Such traits called for worship. And we have it today in the Christ worship, God worship, and Ghost worship of Christianity. Such demoralizing worship accounts for much crime.

Most religions are based on the mental confusion of their founders. Jesus may have gone insane over disappointment in a love affair. The insanity came upon him suddenly as deduced from the story of his first claiming, to be the elect of god. It is told in the 4th Chapter of Luke.

In the town of Nazareth where Jesus had grown up in obscurity, and after his baptism, when he started his career, his townfolk rejected him. He had been preaching in the synagogues and came to his own in Nazareth, and reading from the Jewish writings, claimed to be the Savior sent to redeem the people. He excused his lack of recognition in his home town by saying that a prophet is not honored in his own country and that the prophet Elias had not saved the people of his land from famine for three years, nor had Elias been able to cure any of the lepers of Israel save Naaman.

But these excuses, and his claim to divinity, did not satisfy his townspeople, "And all they in the synagogue when they heard these things were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." But he escaped. Evidently his family and his neighbors considered him insane when he claimed to be God or God's son. "Religion and war are almost synonymous," says Dr. Noyes, "All wars are criminal and nearly all have been provoked by religion." Why are religious nations so criminal, vicious, and miserable?

Because war and religious hate has killed off the best men and women and left the worst.

War degenerates the brain and leads to low respect for, and reckless use of life. After war, many generations pass before the demoralizing influence is obliterated. Carrying guns in war leads to carrying pistols in civil life. And what does a man think who carries a pistol? He imagines how he would act in given cases, and kills imagined assailants a hundred times over. A brain thus wrought may lead to homicide and murder.

Any criminal, any murderer, any bloodthirsty dictator like Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin can find an excuse and an example for his crimes in the Bible.

David was impelled by God, and had God's approval for killing people with saws, harrows of iron, axes of iron and by burning them in brick kilns. (Think of sawing people in two.) Persecutors of heretics had God's approval for wholesale killing with terrible instruments of death.

Centuries of religion killed the sense of right and wrong, centuries of blood and war killed the sense of conscience and made justice in high places so crude that the stealing of 12 cents got a man hung within this century (1800 to 1899).

Rich churches make poverty and poverty makes crime.

Erroneous knowledge of sexual physiology and the scientific relation of the sexes causes estrangement, brutality, disease and crime. The Christian suppression of free and open discussion and understanding of sex problems, and of the approval of normal sex relations, has been a major cause of insanity and abnormal sex complexes, which are factors in the cause of crime.

Had not religion everywhere been identified with crime, would the holy office of the inquisition ever have been established? Had Ferdinand and Isabella, Pope Sextus IV, and Torquemada been infidels, atheists, free-speakers and scientists, would 10,000 men and women not have been burnt alive. It is in the Latin American countries and in Spain, where freethinkers and atheists have been unknown until recently, that the cruel, bloody custom of bull fights has been practiced as an amusement for centuries.

The Bible is full of hypocrisy, such as David and Solomon praising God and at the same time conducting lives of moral depravity, crime, murder, and adultery. You see all down through the ages how religion and crime have gone hand in hand.

Where religion has triumphed, nations have fallen, lapsed into barbarism. Pseudo-philosophy, metaphysical speculation, literary vagaries, scholastic subtleties, poetic fictions, allegorical mysteries, and mythological falsehoods, endanger the brain and unbalance the reason; and a symmetrical use of the mental faculties develops disease, insanity, and crime.

The first judges were clerics.

The real sin in teaching the drinking of the blood of gods is that it tends to make man brutal and blood-thirsty.

Priests and preachers play upon the emotions of the young and old and develop unstable personalities. If the young were trained to reason instead of giving way to emotion, there would be less crime and poverty. Any ordinary man must be a hypocrite to believe all of the obvious falsehoods of the Bible. Ministers get everything wrong

even to a neck collar. Their main business is to confuse truth with falsehood, and declare a lie the truth. Theology is the art of lying; and the defense of any lie, however ancient or often told, creates immorality and crime.

The word sacred, by the way, comes from the word sarco, which means flesh. Sarco-ceremonies helped Jewish priests to get fresh meat, which they could not otherwise be sure of doing in a hot climate. They established a system of sacrifice, or flesh-feast, which allowed them to be sure of fresh meat. They (the priests) saw the animal butchered. It was sarco, sacrifice, flesh-feast, or sacred to them because they were hungry and knew how to eat fresh meat and sell the stale to strangers.

Eliminate religion, and one of the greatest causes of crime and war will have been destroyed.

Let the searcher for truth read in II Samuel of the story of Amnon, who by trickery and deceit enticed his half sister into his bedroom, and raped her. Then like the low-down criminal that he was, he kicked her out, a ruined woman. Amnon was the son of David, the elect of God, and an ancestor of Christ. The brother, Absalom, of the half sister, swore vengeance and by a cowardly trick killed his half brother. That displeased David, but he was later reconciled by a trick and the deceit of one of his ministers and allowed Absalom to return home.

Absalom returned his father's forgiveness by trying to kill him. This is one of the most degrading stories ever written of the incestuous lust of a degenerate; the merciless revenge of a half brother and the villainous endeavor by a criminal son to commit patricide. If God's chosen people, and his elect David, can act like this, then it is not so strange that Christians and Jews have had a criminal history for thousands of years.

Chapter Twenty Seven

The Jews Have Suffered Great Persecution as a Result of Biblical Teachings.

The Jews, founders of the Christian religion, have suffered tremendously as a result of their religion.

They are taught by the Bible that they are god's chosen people and that all other peoples are inferior. They adopted a patronizing manner toward all other peoples. They believed, that other races are to be exploited; they are fair game to be cheated and despoiled. They have the word of the Bible to justify it.

They have a Bible full of examples of glorified cheating, deceit, lying, jealousy, intolerance, trickery, crime, debauchery, rapine, murder, and revenge.

Examples and glorification of men such as David cannot build in the minds of the Jews, a hatred of such practices. Quite the contrary.

Thus, by following the Biblical and rabbinical admonitions and examples, many Jews have, by their deceitful methods, selfishness, and intolerance, brought down the wrath of other races upon their heads.

They were evicted from Egypt as told in their own story of the Exodus in the second book of the Bible; evicted from Jerusalem, evicted from Spain, persecuted in England and the rest of Europe, suffered pogroms in Russia before the Bolshevik revolution, persecuted in Germany under Hitler, in Italy under Mussolini, in France, etc.

Millions have been killed, tortured, and had their property confiscated because they followed the Biblical promises that they were "God's chosen people" and would get the cream of wealth and happiness, because they followed the unethical examples of their sacred prophets and scriptures.

The Jews, more than any other people, have much to gain by discarding their primitive religion which has been such a curse to them for so many centuries.

Where their religion has engendered egotism, selfishness, deceit, cheating, lying and unfairness, they have always, and will

always continue to come into conflict with other religions, races and peoples.

The Jews are supposed to eat Kosher meat only. Kosher meat is obtained from animals killed according to Jewish orthodox rituals, under the supervision of a Jewish rabbi. By this method, unnecessary pain is inflicted on the animals. They are killed by having their throats cut and bleeding slowly to death. The humane modern method is to stun the animal first making it unconscious, then allowing it to bleed.

Such practices have brought hatred to the Jews.

Thus we have the Jews made vain, boastful, selfish, greedy, deceitful, cruel, and unkind by their religion; and these traits, along with other religious differences, have been the cause of persecution of that unhappy race for ages. If the Jews would eliminate their religious practices, they would probably, within a short time, be absorbed into other nations as individuals and the persecutions would cease.

In England and the United States where religion has less hold on the people, the Jews have prospered far beyond other citizens, but there is still bitter feeling towards Jews because of their traits, which are promoted largely by their religion.

Common people, either privately or publicly, usually applaud the ability of "smart" people to deceive others by tricks. The ethics or morals of the case are lost sight of and the point is the cleverness of the deceit or trick. This trait is well illustrated by the folk tales of Reynard the Fox, Robin Hood, Pancho Villa, and many others. Youngsters, especially, have made heroes out of the most criminal types of gangsters in the United States, and the acts of rebels who murder their way to control of the country, such as the so-called presidents of many South American countries, are condoned, and the United States Government recognizes these bandits and rebellious anti-Government leaders who gain control of their countries by killing the presidents in power. Coups-de-etat are considered clever moves and the deceit or fraud or violence is not condemned by either the people or the United States Government, a so-called just government, or by the churches. If the churches were following out certain of the practices which they represent themselves as preaching, they would object to the access of power by the use of violence and would

condemn and refuse to support any such methods or the leaders thereof.

The Bible is full of practices of deceit, trickery, and dishonesty; and these examples have been held up for the Jews especially to read. They cannot be blamed if they follow the example set before them by the book which they consider holy. Many Christians like to boast of the clever tricks they have used to get more for an article than it is worth. There are almost no precedents in the Old Testament of the benefits of giving the other party a fair and square deal.

According to Christian policies, a man who refuses to believe what the priests, preacher, or rabbi tells him, is more apt to burn in hell for eternity than if he tricks his neighbors, and it has been common practice for the church to excuse criminals, if they confess their wrongdoing, do some petty penance, and make a contribution to the church. The churches are full of rascals and hypocrites and this is generally known. The worst politicians and grafters usually have a church affiliation. If the churches lived up to the highest moral and ethical principles, they would refuse to permit such persons to fill their pews.

Joseph Lewis, one of the foremost Freethought leaders in the world and a stalwart defender of atheism and the separation of church and state, among other criticisms of other religions, says: "I am not fighting to perpetuate Judaism, I think it has brought a form of insanity to mankind."

A form of insanity, indeed - this, and all religions, have steeped the world in blood.

Chapter Twenty Eight

Religion is Aided and Subsidized by Selfish Commercialism.

One of the biggest rackets on earth is the Christmas racket. At Christmas time people go wild, buying and sending presents to their friends. They pay exorbitant prices, spend needlessly, and give useless, impractical gifts.

Every merchant and manufacturer spends huge sums on advertising Christmas gifts because it means profits in his pocket. It is a harvest time.

The result of the celebration of religious festivals is a substantial income to the commercial interests which profit from them, so Christianity gets a promotion and an advertisement because it benefits the merchant class, in addition to the priest class, who also reap a harvest at Christmas and Easter.

If gifts were given to show the generosity of the giver and for the benefit of all, little objection could be made, but the procedure is one of selfish promotion, with much show and sham.

Other commercial interests use religion as an aid to their advertising, and still others subsidize the churches so they can keep the people in ignorance and subjection.

Down through the centuries, many selfish interests have organized to promote religion and to suppress opposition to it.

But all of these people are blind to the benefits of progress. Even those priests and preachers who fear to lose their lucrative positions would profit by the prosperity which would prevail if religion were exposed and eliminated.

Chapter Twenty Nine

God and the Atheists

God, according to the Christians, has created men who are atheists, who do not believe what the priests and preachers tell them; he has created sinners who do not know or do not understand his many conflicting commands.

Then God condemns all these persons to eternal hell fire, torture, and suffering. He is not satisfied with killing them, but wants to see them suffer for eternity. What an example of cruelty and hatred for a people to have set before them! What a fine way to encourage tolerance and a better world!

Chapter Thirty

The Evidence for the Existence of God is Worse Than Flimsy

Any so-called evidence of God is only hearsay. We must believe someone else's statement that there is a God. He cannot be seen nor heard. We have stories in the Bible saying some of the old prophets saw him. But the same Bible says, "No man hath seen God." So the Bible itself contradicts those who boasted of seeing God. Until an individual has some definite knowledge of God, he should be doubtful of the claims of the prophets past or present. Most preachers and priests base their knowledge of God on what they have read in the Bible.

Others say every tree and stone and the earth itself is evidence of God. The Bible, written by ignorant, primitive humans, claims that man was made in the image of God. Can any sensible person conceive of a God who controlled the infinite universe looking like an ancient Jew, or any other man?

Hear-say, so-called circumstantial evidence, and faith; these we are called upon to consider as proof of God's existence. We cannot have him deliver a speech to us as the leaders of nations do over the radio. Nor can we see his picture as we do of a president or a king. He does not appear to us in the heavens, nor does he write inscriptions or letters to us. If anyone was to tell us that some man with great influence had given us certain rules and regulations we would want to see him or hear him. By using the same common sense we use regarding sea serpents and ghosts, we would come to the conclusion that God does not exist. Try to prove the existence of a ghost in a law court and you will be considered a fool.

The truth is that priests and preachers want us to believe what they tell us. They do not want us to inquire into the truth of their stories because they fear that investigation will disclose them to be fakers. They want us to believe what they tell us so they will have power over us, to control us, and to collect tithes, dues and contributions from us.

Chapter Thirty One

A Reasonable Analysis of the Sermon on the Mount.

According to religious authorities, the principal teachings of Christ are contained in the Sermon on the Mount. The language of the sermon is childish, in keeping with the mental condition of the people, and the abilities of Matthew, who reported it.

Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Just what is meant by spirit is not understood by practical men.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." When they will be comforted is not known. Millions have mourned and millions are mourning now, without comfort. The result of wars and Christian persecution.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." But only the warlike races and those who have had the courage to fight to protect their liberties have inherited the earth. All others have become slaves, either politically or economically, to the aggressive races.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." But here again the aggressors, the tyrants, and the conquerors seem to have control of the earth, and righteousness has not come to the meek. Apparently these "Beatitudes" were promises that are far from being fulfilled. What fulfillment has come is as a result of the actions of liberty loving men who haven't been followers of the doctrines of Christ or the Christian Church.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." But that is seldom so, the kindest people are often the most imposed upon. Being merciful does not guarantee that mercy will be returned.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." None sees God, at least none who tells about it; so there must be no pure in heart, whatever that is.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." But the Christian church with its long history of religious wars, persecution of Protestants and Freethinkers, burning of witches, the crusades against infidels, the Inquisition, has not been a

peacemaker. There has been no peace; wars are more frequent, destructive and bitter than ever before.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake." This blessing, without practical value, would include blessings on the millions of people who have been persecuted by the Christian church for standing for the righteousness of freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from oppression and religious persecution, freedom from slavery, the very things that the Christian church has fought against for ages.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for your reward is great in heaven; for so persecuted they, the prophets before you."

But here again we have many prophets, sects and churches, all saying the others are wrong; all reviling each other and claiming they do it in Christ's name. In fact all their prayers are asked in Christ's name, including the prayers the Allied Nations made against the Axis forces, and the prayers of the Axis against the Allied, all finished, "In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask...". Both sides thought they were blessed, both sides thought they were doing things for Christ's sake, while each side reviled the other.

"Ye, (his disciples) are the light of the world". But the truth is that his followers by persecution, sword, faggot and fire, intolerance and hatred, brought on the Dark Ages and it was only when liberalism emerged that the darkness of a thousand years began to fade.

Then Christ reminds us of the commandment not to kill. But later on tells his followers that he came to bring "not peace but a sword" and to set father against brother and daughter against mother. He also says it is wrong for one to be angry with his brother, but at the same time he criticizes the Pharisees and Scribes (Scribes were those who were professional letter writers, as the populace, including Christ, were illiterate - Christ left no written works). Here again was opposition to advancement because he attacked those who had tried to improve themselves by learning to write.

Then Christ advises men to agree with "thine adversary quickly, lest he deliver thee to the judge and put thee in prison." This is the opposite of the previous advice for men to be cowardly and to fail to

stand by their principles. Here Christ warns the people they will pay the uttermost farthing before they come out of the prison. The connection, or the importance of this connection, is not clear.

Christian philosophy is morbid. Christ not only reminds the people of adultery but says that anyone who has desire for a woman is an adulterer. Thinking of a crime makes the thinker just as guilty as the criminal who commits such a crime. The thinker does no damage and it is ridiculous to compare the two. Men who are attracted by pretty women, as nature intended them to be, cannot rightly be called sinful because they have normal desires. Had there been a just God he would not have created men with desires and then condemned them to eternal damnation because they thought of the desires.

Practical men will say that the man who has the desire to do something wrong and suppresses that desire is a more courageous man than he who has no desire at all. From a reasonable standpoint, if no wrong is done, no blame should attach to the individual. It is only a fanatic who would hold otherwise.

"If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out" also seems to be unreasonable advice. If something is wrong with the hand or eye, the condition should be corrected. It is no crime for a man to feel desire when he sees an attractive woman. It is natural, and to ask him to pluck his eye out for having followed his natural tendency, is the most debasing kind of philosophy.

Then comes one of the most cruel, most fanatical causes of unhappiness the world has ever known. That is Christ's commandment against divorce, except for one cause, adultery. No matter how cruel a man might be to a woman, no matter how stingy and mean no matter how sexually mismated they might be, no matter how much of a shrew she might be, no matter how mean to the children, or antagonistic to each other, no matter how much they may have grown apart; they were to stay together in unhappiness and misery, leading to crime and insanity. A sensible commandment would have been, "Live together if you can, but when life is unhappy for either of you, then separate and try to be happy with some other mate." The refusal of the Catholic Church to grant divorce and, through its political in-

fluence, to refuse to permit nations for centuries to legislate for civil divorce, has been a cause of great unhappiness, crime, misery, insanity and murder. Christ's outburst was not based on the studies of science, medicine, psychology, and intelligence, but was a fanatical, magnified repetition of old Jewish laws.

Next, Christ commands against taking oaths. This leads to laws against swearing. Saying "By God," seems to be a meaningless and harmless phrase to any reasonable, intelligent man. It is a childish expression, of no importance, yet it has been magnified by the Church and penalties have been imposed upon those who use it.

Christ objects to people swearing "by the head" which seems to be an inconsequential and trivial matter for a great philosopher or a God to concern himself with. "For whatsoever is more than (aye or nay) these cometh of evil." No sensible person can feel that there is anything "evil" or wrong about "swearing by the head." All of it is childish.

After having, on many occasions advised the people to follow the Laws and the prophets, which included the principle of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," Christ reverses himself and advises a philosophy of "resist not evil." But what can he mean by this when he had continually told his disciples to go out and preach against evil? That has been the whole doctrine of the Christian Church, to preach and work against what it called Evil. Christ threw out the evil money changers, he criticized the Scribes and Pharisees and rich men, and brought about his own death by criticizing and resisting evil, and he ordered his disciples to resist it, even to losing their lives. What kind of reversal is this?

No sensible intelligent man would believe in such a philosophy. Evil, whether natural or man made, should be resisted as should oppression and wrong of any kind. The courageous fighters for right and liberty and freedom had and still have to fight against oppression. Only a coward would stand to be whipped, beaten, robbed and humiliated without protest.

When hit on one cheek, turn the other is another part of the same philosophy. When a man takes a coat by law, give him the cloak. This is the philosophy of someone so unreasonable that it does not deserve comment, except that it has been preached by the Christian Church for centuries but never followed by it or any person.

Then Christ says we must love our enemies but does the Church love its enemies? For centuries they burned them at the stake, and classified all those who did not believe exactly as they did, as enemies, even though the non-believers wanted only the right to live their own lives. Not only do the Christians fight against non-Christians, but they fight, often to the death, among themselves, each claiming to be right according to Christ's word. But further than this, did Christ preach a policy of love towards enemies when he threatened eternal hell fire for all those who did not believe in him? Christ indicated that no more credit was to be given to those who loved in return than those who hated. This is certainly an ungrateful, backward and insane philosophy.

While telling his followers to do good works before men so as to set an example, he then reverses himself and tells them to do their alms in secret. No man should be blamed for naturally expecting gratitude for his generosity. It is no crime to expect and receive it. Christ tells people not to pray openly and loudly, yet all churches and preachers pray loudly as if their God were quite deaf. They pray on the radio, broadcasting their prayers over the earth, not because they want God to hear, but because they want to advertise themselves.

The forgiving of trespasses as recommended by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, is not a reasonable thing to do. If a man does wrong he should be made to make reparation, and it should not be easy for him to continue doing wrong. The greatest cause of crime may be the system of the Christian church in forgiving sins and crimes for the expression of belief in their doctrine and for the doing of penance.

Then comes one of the most fanatically wrong commandments ever uttered, "Lay not up treasures on earth, take no thought for the morrow." No wonder famine has followed Christian countries for more than 1000 years. No wonder progress was stopped. "Do nothing, wait for God to feed you. Use all you have, trust to God for the future. Do not resist evil. Do nothing, be nothing, sit and wait for a handout." How much better it would have been if Jesus had said, "Be thrifty, save for your old age and uplift yourselves from poverty. Look to the future, be prepared for emergency and be able to

help your brothers." That would have meant happiness and progress on earth.

Christ's reference to the birds of the fields would indicate that they had nothing to do but eat, but the poor little things have to scratch and fight for their food, watch for hawks and cats and freeze and shiver in the rain. Christ would put man on the animal plane with his philosophy. Who indeed wants to be a beast of the field, fearing the hunter, eternally suffering from vermin, scarcity and disease.

It would be a sorry race if we followed Christ's orders "to take no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat, or drink or wear" etc.

No wonder Christianity has produced nations of loafers and beggars. These arguments of Christ were spectacular, uttered with the sincerity of a paranoiac, and they attracted the poor classes who were uneducated.

Take no thought of the morrow. What a terrible philosophy!! Only by taking thought and preparing for the morrow does humanity progress.

He admonishes hypocrites who criticize others, while they themselves have motes in their eyes. But even if one does have faults, if he can improve others by calling wrongs to their attention, it may benefit them.

Then he says "knock and it shall be opened to you, ask and ye shall receive". But it takes more than that to achieve success.

Then he warns against false prophets, as all prophets warn against other prophets, each claiming divine authority. He promises security to those who follow his sayings and threatens those who do not with destruction. Here we have a jumble of sayings which could come from no one but a fanatic. They are contrary to reason and common sense. They have been held as the grandest sermon ever preached, as the essence of Christianity. Yet few men have taken time to read the actual words. To summarize:

The Sermon on the Mount appears to be the expression of a paranoiac. The commands are childish. They are impractical. They present a program of despair, of inability to cope with the world and improve it. They hinder progress. The practical result is that neither the omnipotent God nor his Son has proved their practicability over the last 1900 years.

The sermon is contrary to right, justice, and fairness. It is a plan of depravity; instead of making men of humanity, it makes hopeless beggars, indifferent to this life. Believers who wait and pray for eternal happiness, instead of working for what they need and living the life they have.

The only good point in the whole sermon is the reference to the Golden Rule, "Do as you would be done by." But the rest of the conflicting and confusing commands destroy the useful effect of the Golden Rule.

Let a thousand priests say that a thing is good and unthinking people will believe it. Let a custom start and it will continue without reason.

People think that if many believe a thing, it must have merit.

Now, let us consider the matter of the "interpretations" of the Sermon on the Mount and other unreasonable religious doctrines. When a thing is not reasonable, when it is not intelligent, not approved by common sense, the religious "lawyers" get busy to make it seem what it is not. They do to the utterances of a crazy man, what a sharp lawyer does to the testimony of witness before a jury. So it is with the Sermon on the Mount. It has to be interpreted because the literal wording of it makes it appear foolish. So the interpreters get to dress it up, camouflage it and make it appear like divine inspiration. But again, common sense should be used. The priests assume an air of being sorry for us that we do not have the intelligence to interpret the document ourselves and have to depend on their superior intellect and experience.

Chapter Thirty Two

Christ Healed Fewer Persons (if any) THAN THE AVERAGE DOCTOR.

Great stress has been placed upon the so-called miraculous cures and healing of people by Christ but all his cures would only be a fractional part of the cures that are effected by present day doctors. One woman doctor told me that she had removed something like ten

thousand cataracts from the eyes of blind people. Psychiatrists say that many of the so-called healings may be brought about by hypnotism and there are all kinds of evangelical healers touring the country who claim miracles of healing.

However, if Christ had the power to heal without medical treatment and if God had the power to prevent illness, why could not all of this be done by one command? Any God or savior who had the power to heal all the disease and suffering of the world and failed to use that power must be held responsible for all suffering and sickness. Only a cruel and monstrous god could gleefully watch the sickness and suffering of the men he created.

Chapter Thirty Three

The Crucifixion Was Neither Divine nor Heroic.

One of the strong points of the Christian religion in obtaining converts is the telling of the story of the crucifixion. Christ was crucified in fulfillment of a previous prophecy and this act was deliberately planned by God, through which Christ, God's son, was to die for the salvation of the sinners that God had created with apparently sinful desires.

Thomas Paine has pointed out that it is contrary to moral principles for one man to die for the sins of others, but that if Christ did die for the salvation of the sinners, they still sin and they still die. They still have sickness and wars and crimes. For all practical purposes Christ's death on the cross has been of no advantage to mankind.

It is plain that the prophecy of the crucifixion for the salvation of the world were later thoughts of the early founders of the Christian church, grown out of the tradition of the mythological story of Christ's death.

Of course, a supreme being with power to do anything could just as easily have changed men so they would not be born in sin or subject to penalties for violating laws that they knew nothing of.

The story of Christ's crucifixion can easily arouse the sympathy and compassion of the average non-thinking, non-reasoning person. As told, it appears a great injustice.

Another aspect to this story is of the man who preached against the Scribes, the Pharisees, the priests and the religious leaders of those times. In other words, he set himself up against both the religious and the political power of his time.

Apparently he was doing more damage to the priests and rabbis than to the Roman rulers. Every place he went he cursed and denounced the religious leaders. It is natural that they would want to do away with such a man. If the crucifixion was supposed to be an event of great significance, there is no reason why it should have been executed in such a niggardly fashion. In the first place, Christ was apparently so little known that the authorities were unable to tell who he was and had to bribe someone to point him out. It does not speak very well for Christ's hold upon his followers, nor of his philosophy, that one of them, Judas, should have betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. This follower must have considered him an imposter instead of the Son of God, and if he had believed that Christ was the Son of God, he most certainly never would have betrayed his Master for such an insignificant sum, or for any amount. If one of Christ's own immediate and appointed followers could have so much doubt, why should those who have received the information about this so-called God, thousands of years later be persecuted for having doubts?

As a matter of fact, the Bible itself tells how the disciples all forsook Christ when he was apprehended. In Matthew 5:6 it is reported—"Then all of the disciples forsook Him and fled."

There is the story of Peter having followed "afar off" the crowd that took Christ before Pilate and then denied that he knew Him. What this illustrates is the natural tendency of men to save their own skins.

Christ's own actions at, and before, the time of the crucifixion were not heroic, as we would expect in the case of a man who was willingly and gladly sacrificing himself for the future salvation of all mankind.

Here another discrepancy occurs. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Judas is reported to have earned his thirty pieces of silver by kissing

Christ, as evidence of who he was, but in John 18:4 Christ is reported to have asked whom they sought and to have said who he was, all of which indicates that the various books of the Bible were based upon oral traditions handed down, translated, interpolated and edited according to the needs of various leaders of the church.

That Christ had knowledge that he was being sought by the authorities is evident by his statements a few days before his apprehension, and it is evident that he was hiding out because it was necessary for the authorities to find someone who would lead them to him. That Christ feared there might be some attempt to injure him is shown by his leaving immediately after hearing rumors that an antagonistic group was gathering; and while his actions were perfectly proper from the standpoint of a prudent man, they cannot be said to be heroic, for it is told in Matthew 12:14 that "Then the Pharisees went out and held a counsel against him, how they might destroy him."

15: "But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself from thence: And great multitudes followed him, and he held them off:

16: "And charged them that they should not make him known." In other words, when he knew the religious leaders were opposed to him, he hid out and tried to keep his hiding place a secret.

Christ showed a considerable amount of caution, for it is related in Matthew 15 that when he heard of John the Baptist, his cousin, having been beheaded, he departed "thence, by ship, into a desert place apart."

In the 26th Chapter of Matthew, the story of Christ's being sorrowful, "even unto death" shows that he was worried and frightened just like any other man would be in a similar case. It is also evident he and his disciples were watching to see that none came, for he chided them for going to sleep.

It is also evident from the difficulty in finding witnesses against him that he was not well known. And from Pilate's words it is clear that the Roman government considered him of no great danger to itself, and Pilate looked upon him much as any Judge would now look upon a religious fanatic claiming to be a King. His chief opponents appeared to be the priests and rabbis whom he had been roundly abusing for several years. It is also clear that Christ, before the crucifixion,

believed that he would be able to call down the Powers of God to protect him, for he says: Matthew 26:53—"Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels?" That Christ believed that he would be saved is also evident by his lamentation in Matthew 27:46—"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying: 'Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani.' That is to say 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"

Now this may well be the mythological or the traditional story of a man, possibly a paranoiac (as stated by the eminent psychiatrist, Wm. Hirsch), who opposed the activities of the Jewish rabbis of his time, and who preached against them, incurring their enmity, and later being crucified at their behest by the civil authorities, who endeavored to keep the people they were governing in hand, by satisfying the religious elements of the land. As long as the religious rulers of a country can be appeased, and as long as they can have their own advantages, they tend to keep the people docile before foreign rulers. This is a method of governing people which has long been used by the British government, which in India and Africa and all of its far flung possessions permits its priests, preachers, and religious leaders to continue on with all of their fees and advantages as long as they do not interfere with the civil or military government.

But to claim the story of the crucifixion as the heroic death of a supreme being, or his son, or the third part of the Trinity, is ridiculous.

Chapter Thirty Four

Christ's Sayings Are Garbled and Conflicting-

It is said that the Bible is "all things to all men." Many rascals and many pious frauds use the Bible as a pretext for carrying on their activities. It is said that Christ preached to the people, and many of his purported sayings are quoted in the Gospels, but judging from the various reports of the sayings, there is no consistency to them.

Here we will examine many of the conflicting and garbled statements which have been the cause of confusion among Christian followers for two thousand years. Because of the differences in his statements, the different times and the different versions, as reported by the four Apostles, different Christian sects have been in conflict for centuries.

It is probably true that in the early centuries of the church, before the days of printing, many churches had differing copies of various books of both the Old and the New Testament. Much of the material was handed down at first by oral tradition, and only later was it written. The copies changed to suit their own ideas, and as the manuscripts were passed from hand to hand, they were changed and edited and interpolated and translated until there are now hundreds of religious sects, each believing that the others are wrong, and each having a different idea of the Testaments they follow.

In the fifth Chapter of Matthew, Christ appealed to the poor and poverty stricken, giving the impression that those who were successful and powerful would not go to Heaven, as was promised to the poor.

This is the typical talk of political demagogues who hope to get a large following by promising something to the lower classes.

Then he says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." Contrast this with his statement that he "did not come to bring peace, but a sword and to set brother against brother and daughter against daughter and father against mother."

He says "neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel" but that "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven.

In the next chapter he says, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven."

Here he expressly commands people to show their good works, but later he says: "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth," and commands his followers not to permit their philanthropies to be known. What a ridiculous thing it is for him to say: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, for it is

profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Then he repeats about cutting off the offending hand. The result of this commandment has caused many weak-minded people to injure themselves, and only a few years ago a Canadian priest cut off his hand with a hatchet.

Christ's statement as to divorce is unreasonable. It is not the fault of two people that they are unable to live happily together. Why then should either or both be condemned to eternal hell fire because they divorce each other? Not only does Christ threaten them with hell fire, but the people they marry, according to Christ, also commit adultery and are subject to eternal damnation.

Some Biblical followers quote the Biblical instruction—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Others, to satisfy their demands, quote Christ's saying - "Resist not evil, but whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." How does this contrast with the philosophy, later expressed by Christ of setting people against each other?

Besides this, it is a ridiculous thing and of no benefit in any way for people to encourage other people to injure them. Rational intelligence indicates that being good to other people when they are good to you, and protecting yourself against those who are injuring you, is the sensible way of life.

But let us consider whether the Christian followers have paid any attention to "turning the other cheek"—"to returning good for evil." Down through the centuries the intolerant church leaders have burned at the stake, tortured, imprisoned, or massacred those who did not believe exactly as the religious leaders believed. Was that following the commandment to turn the other cheek?

Christ later exhorts his followers to "Enter into thy closet and pray and not to do it from the house tops," yet practically all of the religious congregations since that time pray loudly and publicly.

Another of Christ's philosophies is against thrift and saving.

He tells men to "take no thought of the morrow, to lay up no treasures," and if his suggestions were carried out we would have a nation of paupers expecting to be fed from heaven. Suppose everyone followed Christ's saying—"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on

.... Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feeds them." Of course, Christ does not tell of the terrific struggle that goes on among birds and other animals for survival; or how the birds fight, scratch, hunt, and dig all day for enough to eat, and how they must be vigilant against all kinds of enemies. As a rule, they lead a very fearful life and few die of natural causes. If God is warden over the birds and the animals, he certainly is a poor protector, for many of them are wounded, injured in fights, starved, frozen, and torn to pieces by their fellows at the least sign of weakness or sickness.

At one place, Christ says: "Which of you, by thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" But in another place Christ claims "Thy faith can do anything, even to moving mountains."

Christ exhorts his followers to seek the kingdom of God, and for centuries priests and preachers have exhorted their followers to seek the kingdom of God. But what is the kingdom of God ? Most of the priests and preachers have had different ideas as to what the kingdom of God is, and certainly the garbled accounts, exhortations and preachings of Christ give no idea as to what men are to do to seek the kingdom of God, because many of his statements are conflicting.

It is true that religious leaders have sought to pick out and magnify certain parts of the Christian philosophy as a basis for attracting followers, but if they choose to minimize some of Christ's sayings, that is only an indication that they don't believe in them fully, and again the argument is presented that if one part of the book is fallible or false, or erroneous, the whole structure, including the claim of the existence of a Supreme Being, falls.

Had Christ wanted to expound a philosophy of the golden rule, and let it go at that, there could have been little criticism of his sayings, and had the whole Bible been based on the golden rule, the bloodshed and persecution of the ages might have been avoided.

Certainly it is not a very reverent act for Christ to tell one of his followers to let his dead father lie,— "let the dead bury the dead" and, of course, this is a commandment which the churches do not follow, as there is huge revenue for them in conducting funerals.

In one passage Jesus denounces the publicans and sinners, but in Matthew 9 :10 he sits down and eats with them.

At one place Christ quotes the golden rule, but in Matthew 10:21 he says: "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death."

It is impossible to harmonize these two principles. At one place Christ tells his disciples: "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." But at another place he says: "Preach ye upon the house tops and fear not them which kill the body." What would a disciple do? Of course, this, like all of the Biblical injunctions, provide the followers with many "outs" or excuses to do whatever they want to do.

Christ's claiming to be the Son of God and the King of the Jews and boasting to John in Chapter 11:4, of the things that he had done, was the opposite of being meek and lowly, which he held up as one of the methods of getting to heaven.

Tolerance is not one of Christ's principles. In Matthew 11:20 he upbraids the cities where most of his work was done. He threatens many of them saying they "shall he brought down to hell."

If Christ, in person, was not able to influence these cities it speaks ill of his divine ability; and his then threatening the cities for not doing as he told them smacks of childish intolerance. Later Christ says: "For I am meek and lowly in heart."

In the 12th Chapter of Matthew he excuses his disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath, but in other preachings he enjoins his followers to obey strictly the rites and rituals of the Old Testament.

Did Christ speak well of the people following his own commandment to speak well of people who spoke evil of them? No, in the 12th Chapter of Matthew he refers to the people of his times as "a generation of vipers."

Was it a sign of courteousness and friendliness when his mother and brother came to see him and he refused to recognize them, as related in the 12th Chapter of Matthew? Is it a philosophy of returning good for evil when Christ says of the people who did not follow him, that the Angels would come forth and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: "There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Throughout Christ's preachings is the threat of hell fire, eternal hell fire - for those who fail to follow him, but at the same time he exhorts his followers to follow the teachings of the rabbis.

Another example of childishness, suspicion, and petty hatred is Christ's cursing of the fig tree mentioned in the 21st Chapter of Matthew. Christ was hungry and when he found no figs on the tree he cursed it, that it might never grow fruit again. It is childish to curse inanimate objects, and the tree certainly did not know that it was expected to have fruit for Christ that morning as it was not the season for bearing figs, what advantage would it be to anyone to spitefully cause the tree to be withered because it was barren?

In the 23rd Chapter of Matthew, Christ, speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees, ordered his followers,—“All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.” But at the same time he denounces them for their acts, violates his own commandment to—“speak well of those that hate you.”

It was perfectly proper for Christ or anyone to criticize hypocrites and the religious leaders, but endeavoring to preach one thing and practice another is only an indication of the ridiculousness of the conflicting and garbled Biblical commandments.

Christ predicted that during the generation in which he was preaching, the sun would be darkened and the moon would not give light, the stars would fall from heaven and the powers of the heaven would be shaken and the son of man would return and reign over the earth but, of course, this vain boast was never fulfilled.

Chapter Thirty Five

There Are Grave Doubts Whether or not Christ Ever Lived

Many eminent authorities claim that no such person as Christ ever lived, any more than such gods as Mars, Isis, Woden, Siva, Zeus, Jupiter, Juno, Baal, and a host of other reputed gods, ever lived. Their lives have been based on myths. Why the Christian believes in one myth rather than another is hard to determine.

They say that there is practically no evidence of the life of such a person in the writings of the contemporary historians.

The story of Christ closely parallels the story of the Hindu Krishna.

Krishna, reported to have been born 1000 years before Christ, was born of a virgin mother in a cave; he was worshiped by wise men; his father like Joseph had come to pay taxes; the tyrant who ruled ordered all children born that night to be slain; but Krishna's father, like Joseph, had had a dream and fled with the child; Krishna was a second person in a Trinity; he was crucified; descended to hell like Christ; freed some saints; and ascended to Heaven in the flesh.

The story is very similar to the Christ story and it is very reasonable that the latter was copied from it. It was much easier in the days of ignorance and illiteracy to copy a myth than now, yet in this country today the average person who is not a student knows little or nothing of the story of Krishna.

A man who healed thousands by the touch of his hand, who died and was resurrected, would be so well known that his acts would be recorded at the time. Statues would have been raised to him, inscriptions carved, histories written, at the time. While the trivial events of those times were often recorded, nothing authentic has come to light of the life of Christ written at the time. All of the vast mountain of books about Christ and the Christian religion were written in later centuries.

For all practical purposes of course, it makes no difference whether Christ lived or not. It is certain that the devils and ghosts reported in the Bible never lived, but that makes no difference; the churches still require their followers to believe in them.

Chapman Cohen, one of the great students of religion, says: "There is no document secular or religious, contemporary with Jesus, which mentions the alleged details chronicled in the Bible."

Even the Egyptians 4000 years before had statues, stones, and tombs with engraved hieroglyphics recording their history and important events. No such records have been uncovered, contemporary with Christ, indicating his existence.

As has been shown, the veracity of the stories told in the Bible, like those told in the Arabian Nights fables, must be doubted by intel-

ligent men, and if any of it is questionable, then the story of the life of Christ, must also be open to grave doubt.

Christians doubt the stories of the gods of other religions and cults; and the latter doubt the stories of the Christians, with their tales of ghosts, angels, devils, Satan, cherubim, seraphim, and all the unseen evil and good spirits of the Bible.

Chapter Thirty Six

Why Does God Allow Criminals to Prosper?

If there is a god, why does he permit criminals and tyrannical dictators to prosper? Innocent women, children, and good men suffer, are sick, lose all they have, and yet tyrants who ruthlessly plunge nations into war prosper and receive the acclaim of the world, and often of great church leaders. Many have seen pictures of children murdered and maimed by war. What wrong could they have done? What sin could they have committed? Yet they suffer agonies. Only a devil or a monstrous God could see these little ones suffer without raising a hand to help them. Yet the tyrants and dictators who are the cause of this suffering prosper and their stupid followers praise them to high heaven. They claim heaven is blessing them, and so it seems, for if God were just, he would not allow them to continue in their lives of murder, destruction, and rapine.

Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Hirohito, Nero, Caesar, and a host of murderous sovereigns back through the centuries have brought misery, torture, pain, suffering and hunger to helpless millions - why could God not have stopped them?

The answer is simple: there is no God.

Chapter Thirty Seven

Common Sense Would Dispel Religion

The statement of Jean Meslier, Catholic priest, who wrote a magnificent work against religion 200 years ago, that common sense

should dispel religion is very true. He reminds us that if we would use the common sense of every day life in considering the miracles and dogmas of religion, we would not believe them.

If our next door neighbor told us he had successfully ordered the sun to stand still all day as Joshua claims to have done, we would consider him a plain liar or insane. Thus by using this common sense we would know that Joshua's story is not worthy of credence. Thomas Paine said about Jonah and the whale, "Is it easier to believe that a whale swallowed a man and carried him 3 days in his belly, then cast him up alive, or is it easier to believe that a man lied?" Common sense believes the latter.

If our grocer told us his son had been crucified, but had been raised the third day, and later had ascended to heaven, we would likewise consider him a liar or a nut. So when we are told such a story by a priest who has read it in a book written by an unknown writer, common sense tells us to consider it a fable.

It is a psychological fact that the average man is apt to believe a big lie while not swallowing a small one. Adolf Hitler, the mad German dictator, recognized this method of fooling the people and said that they do not recognize a large lie because of their lack of mental power, but that they are able to detect small lies because they themselves often tell them.

So the light of common sense, thrown on the stories of making snakes out of rods, of the Red Sea dividing itself, of Christ's making wine from water, curing blind men by rubbing spit in their eyes, walking on water, the story of the flood, God's making the world in six days, of making a woman from Adam's rib; and all the mythical, miraculous stories of the Bible would cause any sensible man to question the veracity of the whole book, including all the stories of the gods, spirits, angels, devils, and the things that common sense tells us are not true.

When we read the Arabian Nights, or Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales, or Alice in Wonderland, common sense tells us that these stories are for amusement, The genii which come from the lamp and give its owner whatever he wants, the fairies who grant people wishes, the magic powers of the animals which talk, are all imaginary. Why not apply the same common sense to religious stories?

When we read of the theories held by savage and primitive people, we smile at their belief in good and evil spirits, but these poor deluded people believe such spirits are hidden in each rock and tree. We have progressed enough to know better. It is time we took a step further and discredited the similarly foolish stories written by the primitive, ignorant Jews. We know that the poor savage is under the influence of a scheming, crafty priest or witch doctor who tells him these stories to keep him paying tithes. Our priests and religious leaders play on the credulity of our young, ignorant and lower classes of people.

If the waitress in your cafe were to tell you that she had become pregnant without intercourse with a man, but had a dream that the Holy Ghost had impregnated her, and she was soon to have a child, would you believe it?

So it is with other portions of the Bible with its vengeful, wrathful God who showed his hinder parts to Moses; who created people sinful and then punished them for their sins; who ordered the Jews to slay the Canaanites so they could take their land, cattle and virgins; who sent his son to be crucified and then resurrected him.

Apply common sense to the silly doctrine of the Trinity.

In the end, if common sense is used, we will discount the whole of the Christian religion as a mass of mythological stories, probably originated and propagated for the purpose of giving the priests and rabbis control of ignorant people so they could exploit them and live lives of ease and plenty.

Chapter Thirty Eight

Revelations

According to Thomas Paine, a revelation is a revelation only to the man to whom it is revealed. After that it is only hearsay. Many persons have hallucinations. The asylums are filled with them.

Dr. William Hirsch, in a masterly volume, *Christianity and Civilization*, gives good evidence that most of the Jewish prophets of

antiquity, including Jesus Christ were insane; suffering from incurable paranoia.

He outlines the progress of the disease beginning with delusions of persecution, of grandeur, of hallucinations, and the belief that they talk with others. I have personally known individuals who believed devils were persecuting them; who believed they talked with spirits. It would be easy for the prophets of old, including Jesus to have God and religious matters on their mind. Who has not heard rumors of people going insane by constant thought on one subject? Here were these prophets who only had the Bible or traditional priestly storytellers to tell them of the history of religious matters. There were no other books and few other traditions. Only the fabulous stories could survive or interest people. And the prophets in listening to them, recorded them in their minds. Hirsch stresses the fact that such persons are sincere. They know they have seen these visions, they have talked with God; and these delusions and hallucinations are just as real to them as if they actually happened. And it is easy for people who have evolved and survived by reason of their "believing" attitude to be fooled by the sincerity of such men.

Even within the last one hundred years, people have been fooled by such persons as Mary Baker Eddy, who has millions of suckers believing that there is no such thing as disease. We have the Mormons who believe that Joseph Smith was appointed by God to find certain golden tablets and that he had a certain glass, which by looking through, he saw the letters on the golden tablets translated, with the result that the book of Mormon was written and millions of disciples now accept his story.

Then we have the case in New York City, of Father Divine, a negro, who says, and whose followers, numbering hundreds of thousands, believe, that he is God.

When such things occur in a so-called enlightened age, such as ours, when we have freedom of religion and discussion and unlimited opportunity to investigate by scientific means all the exaggerated claims of such people, what can we expect of the ignorant primitive of centuries ago when there was no science, when rulers were despots, when less than ten percent of the people could read?

Hirsch stresses the important point that these paranoiacs often are men with superior intelligence, that they often lead quiet lives for years and that the disease presents itself suddenly and progresses from one step to another rather rapidly. He points out that the history of the activities of the various prophets is similar.

Whoever has listened to the "revelations" of insane persons, or to the ravings of those under the influence of alcohol or narcotic drugs, or of those suffering from high fever during serious illness, will understand the peculiar ideas which the prophets were able to foist on their followers as being of the same divine nature.

As Thomas Paine points out in his *Age of Reason*, had there been a god who wanted to reveal anything to the people he could have done so to all people in an unmistakable manner. We would not have to depend on the word of a few anonymous authors who obtained the information secondhand. Such evidence is called hearsay by the legal fraternity and is not admissible in court, as it is little better than plain gossip.

Now let us examine the so called book of Revelation. It is truly no more than the writing down of the imaginings of a paranoiac. Compare the statements as contained in the Bible with reason and this will be self evident.

For 2000 years cults similar to the Seventh Day Adventists have been predicting the end of the world, based on the story in Revelation.

Here, John, who claimed to be writing what he heard, says he was on the Isle of Patmos, when he heard a Great Voice and he saw seven golden candlesticks, and an apparition of Christ. "It had white hair, its feet burned as if in a furnace and out of its mouth went a two edged sword," Clearly the delusion of an insane person.

Then John presumably had a vision of the God his mind conceived:

3. "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald.

4. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5. "And out of the throne proceeded lightning, thundering and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6. "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto a crystal: and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7. "And the first beast was like a lion and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8. "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come."

10. "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying

11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Can any intelligent person believe that this story is different from the vision of a drunkard in the throes of delirium tremens? The book of Revelation is a mess of jargon and inexplicable rantings. Any intelligent man hearing such a story today would certainly question either the sobriety or sanity of such a tale. Why are we to believe such trash because it was written 15,000 miles from here and 2000 years ago? Because it was profitable to the early founders of the church to make people believe this kind of story. They built, with the help of the sword of the rulers, a strong church that forced Europe into 700 years of stupidity, filth, and poverty. During this period, known as the "Dark Ages," intelligent men were persecuted because of their attempts to educate the people.

There is no reason why intelligent persons should believe the so-called Revelation any more than they should believe the unreasonable stories of Mohammedanism or of any other religions. For example, the Japanese once believed their emperor was a descendant of the Sun God and that they were a chosen people.

With the people of the early ages, whose intelligence was low, whose means of communication were extremely limited, when there was practically no science, when mankind was still barbaric, and nomadic, there was so little opportunity to question the demands of the priests and preachers that people believed what they were told. The people of the lower classes had no better explanation of the growth of the world than that given them by the priests.

Later, as the church gained followers, and with the support of the army under Constantine the Great, people had to believe, or pretend to believe, or suffer imprisonment or death.

There was only one side to everything, the church side. All opposition was killed. For centuries the average man couldn't read because the churches discouraged education. If they could read they were prohibited by the Catholic Church from reading the Bible. An intelligent man who reads this conglomeration of myths, fables, and records of delusions, cannot help but see the book for what it is.

When an alleged god reveals to all men and not to one man, then we can have some confidence in a Revelation.

Chapter Thirty Nine

Religion Has Done Little to Prevent War, Famine, Crime, Oppression, Misery, and Unhappiness

For ages men have been and still are, human slaves. In the United States of America as late as 1865, black men had little more freedom than dogs or horses. They were owned as chattel by white masters. The masters could and did make them work all their lives without any pay whatever. Every slave could be beaten, mauled, mutilated or killed, and many were so treated by drunken and cruel masters. The children of the slaves were sold like cattle and sheep. All of these things were done under legal authority. All of these terrible things were done under sanction of the Christian religion. Most American slave owners were religious Christians. The slaves themselves were supposed to be Christians.

Those who favored slavery quoted the Bible as authority for maintaining this cruel and inhuman practice. The Catholic Church and the Baptist church stood side by side in protecting the perpetrators of this inhumanity and oppression. When the Civil War took place, the Methodist Church in America divided on the question of slavery. The Methodist Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Church existed separately for generations. The Methodist Church South espoused the practice of slavery.

Men who owned slaves preferred to fight and kill or be killed rather than give up ownership of their human chattel. Even to this day Christian men, including priests and preachers, countenance and assist the whites of the South in keeping the Negroes there from voting and expressing their political views as all Americans are supposed to have the right to do.

Every office holder who takes an oath to support the Constitution of the United States winds up by saying, "So help me God" and then nullifies many of the rights the Constitution tries to guarantee.

Since the birth of Christ there have been only a few years in which there was not a war between Christian peoples. Cruel and tyrannical wars of extermination against the Indians of America were carried on by Christian people. With a Christian cross in one hand, a sword and gun in the other, the early Christian Spaniards conquered the Indians in North and South America. Murder, rape, torture, and enslavement, and in many cases extermination, followed in the bloody wars of the Spanish conquests under Pizarro and Cortez. The Catholic Church grew wealthy beyond its dreams as the result of this conquest. The Indians were Christianized under force of arms, but the new god they prayed to was as powerless as the old ones to protect them from the cruelty of their Christian conquerors.

In recent years, the Italians under Mussolini, ruthlessly murdered their way to ownership of the lands of Ethiopia, in one of the most cold blooded robbing expeditions ever known. The Ethiopian King, still worshipping the same god, was only restored to his throne by a more powerful nation.

Did the Pope raise one word of protest? Did any Christian church or Christian country actually do anything to stop them? Did the Christian God that the poor Ethiopians pray to do anything to save

them? Did the Christian God the Italians pray to deliver the land to them without a fight? No, the men with the strongest arms won in that war as they have in all other wars.

Why must people still remain befuddled and think that their gods control their fates when they see Christian nations murdering other Christian nations as each prays to the same God of "love and good will" to permit them to get to their neighbor's throat so they can slit it?

The Hindus have their gods, Buddha, Krishna, Siva, and a thousand others. Each one is supposed to be a protector of some class or group.

But murder, misery, early death, depravity, oppression, serfdom and starvation are the daily lot of the Hindus. And so it has been from time immemorial, the strong oppress the weak. The oppressors and aggressive fighters inherited the earth and control it today. Gods of clay, wood, brass, gold, and iron, gods of imagination such as the Christian, Mohammedan, and other gods, have been prayed to in vain for ages by gullible fools.

Chapter Forty

Only Ignorant People Claim that the Universe Cannot Operate Without a God

A man who cannot conceive of a universe operating without the assistance of a directing god is an ignorant Man. He is like the savage who cannot conceive of the earth being round because his mental capacity has not yet reached the stage where abstract conceptions are possible. He attributes every breeze to the spirits and considers the moon and the sun as great spirits. Those with such mentality will never be able to shake off religion and superstition any more than a dog can understand algebra.

Chapter Forty One

The Bible Still Promotes Bloodshed

A typical example of how religion causes bloodshed, war, hatred and unhappiness is the Bible-inspired invasion of Palestine, (Israel) by the Jews.

As a result of having been taught from earliest childhood that Jews are God's chosen people, and with the example of God having ordered the Jews to exterminate the Canaanites, the original inhabitants of Palestine, modern Jews actually believe they have the right to take Palestine away from the Arabs who lived there for many centuries. They have driven the Arabs out, killed those who have resisted and taken their lands, goods and lives - all as a result of the teaching by their fanatical rabbis. It means nothing to the Jews that for generations they have lived in Europe, Asia or America, that they do not speak Hebrew, and that the Arabs have lived in their land for more than a thousand years. By force of arms they are taking the homes away from the weaker Arabs.

By using political manipulation in Britain, the United States and the United Nations, and with the great financial support from United States Jews, they are able to obtain the support of the great powers in invading the land of the Arabs and setting up their own country. The foolish Christians in America think that this is foreordained by the Bible and few think it wrong. A great hatred is being engendered among the Arabs, apparently helpless to protect themselves from the might of the great powers who are backing the Jews. The Arabs not only hate the Jews, but Americans, British and other foreigners who support the Jews in their invasion. The hatreds, injustices and wrongs, thus engendered will probably last for several generations and thus another center of bloodshed, trouble, possible future war and world distress can be traced directly to religion.

Chapter Forty Two

The World Would Have Been Better off if Christianity Had Been Founded on Simple, Ethical Principles

If Christianity had been founded on an ethical philosophy, instead of mythological, miraculous, fabulous, conflicting, confusing doctrines and statements, the religion might have been a progressive movement. If Jesus had simply said, "Do as you would be done by. Do not lie, cheat, steal, murder, injure your fellow man, or commit adultery," rivers of blood might not have been spilled, nations exterminated and the world set back centuries because of the Dark Ages.

Instead, the Bible is full of intolerance. Christ taught intolerance, he threatened all who did not understand or believe in his way with eternal hell fire and damnation, he came with "a sword," to turn father against son, sister against brother, and nation against nation.

If he had said, "We will get rid of all the old trash and start new, we will live according to the golden rule, we will seek happiness on this earth, we will use cooperation to bring peace and prosperity; we do not believe in killing others, we believe in tolerance; we will fight for what is our right, but we will not prevent others from having their rights; we will not beg or cringe; we will not fear the unknown; we will favor freedom; we will oppose slavery and oppression; we will favor freedom of religion, freedom of speech; freedom of writing," he could have established a basis for progress.

But instead, we find the church supporting slavery; setting brother against brother; reeking with intolerance; full of ridiculous and insane doctrines; degrading women; opposing scientific progress; reaching into every part of men's lives; despising happiness in this world; promising it for the next; preaching a morbid, sickly fanatical gospel instead of a calm rational and scientific philosophy; even promising redemption from the cruelest crimes if the criminal will only believe the dogmas and the doctrines.

Chapter Forty Three

Religion Has Never Supported Modern Democratic Ideals

Thomas Paine, the real founder of modern democracy and an important leader in the founding of the United States, and the Americanism set forth in the Constitution, still the grandest document on human happiness ever written, proclaimed the brotherhood of man.

He did not have the advantage of Darwin's great scientific discovery or of modern knowledge of biology. But he set forth the bold principles that every man should have equal rights without being classed a pariah or an outcast. He set forth the principle of a square deal for all, justice, equality, cooperation, happiness.

This principle eliminates slavery, denies the divine right of kings, sets aside the theory that nobles should dress in silk and the common men in cotton. It rules against slavery, injustice to children and the degradation of women. It sets forth the right of the lowest born to rise to the highest office in a nation. It opposes all of the selfishness and intolerance of special groups or races of people. It wipes out, in a magnificent gesture, the rules, customs, and principles of religion and its horrors.

Paine, a deist, believed that God created man. He did not know that man evolved from lower forms of life; that there was no beginning. His great mind set forth this noble principle in spite of the lack of scientific knowledge, and in fact, it was his courageous support of the new government of the United States which made possible great advancement in such knowledge.

Consider the Biblical story that the Jews were God's chosen people. No equality there. The Canaanites were slaughtered to make room for them. "Slaves, obey your masters" is the Biblical injunction. Women were kept down for ages by Christianity, and still are, in the more Catholic countries, in India, in the Moslem countries, in Asia and in Africa, as a result of religious or superstitious practices.

According to Christ, only his followers would go to Heaven. All the rest were to burn in hell for eternity. There is no equality here. The most religious countries have an aristocracy. Children born to the blood live lives of ease and comfort while other children are seldom able to rise above poverty, ignorance, and hunger. Their station in life does not depend on their ability or worth, but on their forebears. Spain, Hungary, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, India and, in fact, most of the world, let no man of ordinary birth reach the wealth and splendor of the nobility. Nearly all believers of religions think the followers of all other religions will not survive death, or if they do will not go to the best heaven.

With all the jargon, all the ritual, all the millions of so-called holy books, ceremonials, preaching and customs, no religion has ever set forth such a grand principle as that Superior Man, Thomas Paine, that all humans have equal rights. That principle has brought more happiness, more hope, more justice to more men, than any other ever set forth.

And let us not forget that the churches and religions maligned and excoriated, cursed and ridiculed, hated and fought Thomas Paine, the champion of this principle, and they still seek to besmirch his grand and benevolent character.

Chapter Forty Four

Churches Should Pay Taxes

There are billions of dollars worth of church property in the United States which pay no taxes whatever.

Because of fear of losing the votes of the churchgoers, the politicians have allowed the churches to go free from taxes.

No income taxes are paid on the enormous and unaccounted church income.

Those who do not use the churches have to pay the taxes which the churches are exempt from. This is wrong and foreign to the constitution, and a political supreme court would probably be afraid to rule against the churches.

It is wrong because the Federal government has no right to allow state or any government to grant churches a subsidy and that is what the exemption amounts to. It must amount to several billion dollars a year in tax exemption.

They do not pay any income taxes upon the tremendous profits they make.

Our taxes could probably be cut 10 per cent if churches were required to pay their fair share. This saving in taxes would buy many homes and provide greater education and recreation for those of us who have this tremendous tax exemption fund indirectly drained from our pockets into the pockets of the religious profiteers. (It doesn't go to the members of the churches, but to the leaders.)

By paying no taxes on their churches, schools, and income, they grow richer and thus continue to accumulate more money with which to provide easy lives for the church leaders. They also have the money to spread their propaganda and influence legislation.

One of the greatest wrongs is for priests and preachers to be exempt from military service while the rest of us common scrubs are drafted and subjected to the harshness of military discipline.

Even if priests or preachers volunteer to go to war as chaplains they receive high salaries and are commissioned as officers and thus live lives of comparative ease while the rest of us do the fighting to protect their properties, fat pay, and special privileges.

Chapter Forty Five

Superior Men

The development of a race of superior men will be achieved by the development of men who act in all respects according to reason.

They will determine the best way to do the best things necessary from a study of all the facts, records and experiences of their own and others.

They will depend on facts rather than guesses - they will employ science rather than prejudice - they will use the best methods instead of traditional methods.

They will discard the fairy tales, mythologies, religions, and superstitions developed by primitive, unscientific and ignorant peoples. Freeing the mind from the accumulations of thousands of years of these mental cobwebs will allow greater attention to progressive, constructive, beneficial thoughts.

One of the most important steps in developing this race of superior men is to free men from the superstitions, religious beliefs, and traditions which develop prejudices, which prevent the use of reason and which build stone walls against progress, intelligence, and science.

It is the purpose of this book to point the way to freedom from religious and superstitious beliefs.

The elimination of the mental debris of religion will leave room for the development of reason.

This book may be but the beginning of the study to dispel religion; an awakening of the effort of its readers to discard religion and superstition. Such study will require dozens of other books and perhaps years of thinking. But the man whose mind has not been so warped by miseducation that he is unable to reason, will see at least a glimmer of light to lead him out of the mental fog in which the mass of believers grope blindly. He will replace religion and superstition with reason.

Thomas Paine says: "He who denies to another this right (the right of others to hold different opinions) makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it."

The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. And the growth of reason among men will increase the number of superior men.

When the world is ruled by superior men, there will be no wars, no crime, no sickness and no unhappiness. It may never be that superior men rule. It may take thousands or tens of thousands of years of evolutionary advancement.

Selfish and stupid leaders may destroy humanity with atomic bombs or powerful poisons in a short period.

Superior men are destroyed in most countries dominated by Russia, and they are suppressed in the rest of the world, probably

least of all in U. S. A. and Great Britain. Not one per cent of the people of the world are able to reason and those who do are destroyed and suppressed by the other 99 per cent.

However, the intelligence of superior men does increase and this marvelous accumulation of knowledge gives tremendous strength to the intelligence of the few.

Unfortunately, the great ideals of the superior men who framed the U. S. Constitution with free speech, free press, individual liberty and freedom are still ideals and not facts.

Mohammed, Christ, Moses, Joseph Smith, Luther, Buddha, Caesar, Napoleon, Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini, Ghengis Khan, swept whole nations and great portions of the world in a short time with their philosophies, rules and conquests.

Should a superior man start the right spark, it is possible that the rule of intelligence might sweep the world as those insane and cruel religious and military crusades have swept large portions of the world at various times.

Following reason, a new era in human happiness will prevent a relapse to the present rule of insanity, cruelty, disease, war, crime and unhappiness.

It is the purpose of this book to point the way, however faintly, toward that goal.

When the churches and their vast incomes are used for schools, hospitals, colleges, and centers for scientific research, great constructive benefits to humanity will ensue. A double gain will result from the cessation of the destructive forces of religion, plus the constructive use of the money and energy now wasted in promoting superstition.

Chapter Forty Six

The Philosophy or Ethics of Atheism.

The most intelligent men have developed the highest philosophy of life, the best code of ethics, the best rules of the interassociation of men.

These rules, principles, and philosophies have been developed by the reason of these intelligent men, based on the thousands of years of history of the human race. The mistakes of the past, the religions of the past, the philosophies of the past have been considered as a part of the mass of knowledge from which reason has chosen those moral practices which are best for humanity.

These results have been reached not by superstition, fanaticism, miracles, bloodshed, terrorism, or compulsion, but by the calm reasoning faculties of the most intelligent men.

No priest, church, pope, bishop, devil, savior, hell, heaven, ritual or special day is necessary to aid the establishment or practice of this set of principles.

Intelligent men believe in the Golden Rule of treating others as you want them to treat you. They believe in honesty. Honesty among men saves time, prevents misunderstanding, provides security in dealing and living with others.

They do not lie or misrepresent. They do not cheat, steal, rob or assault others. These acts are not necessary for the comfort of men willing to work for what they need.

Work is not disagreeable for those who are well trained, and any man can be trained for what he is best fitted.

They seek to cooperate for the best interests of all, to aid progress and science and to assist in obtaining better things for all men.

They are opposed to wars, except for defense, but believe in being in a position to protect themselves from those who are aggressors or who seek selfish and unfair advantages.

They favor justice for all; no discrimination, freedom of thought, speech, writing, separation of church and state, and equal opportunity for all.

Atheists believe in tolerance, that advances should be made by education rather than by force, and that tax exemption of churches is wrong.

They believe that every person should do his share for the common good, that each man should earn his own way, that there is no place in society for loafers, chisellers, and cheats who want to live at the expense of others.

They believe in courage, forthrightness and energetic support of their principles.

The atheist approves of those things which benefit humanity - he disapproves those things which are a detriment to it.

The atheist believes the highest aim of all mankind is happiness - having what we want, here in this life on this earth, now.

The atheist believes in reason, he disapproves of superstition, religion, all forms of supernaturalism, fables, myths, miracles, heavens, hells, purgatories, gods, angels, devils, witches, wizards, and all the imaginative paraphernalia associated with them.

The atheist does not believe that men were born in sin, that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, that the innocent must suffer for the guilty, that crime can be paid for by saviors.

The atheist believes all men should be happy, cheerful, live full lives with their heads up, not groveling before images of gods; not handicapped by being taught that all men are sinners and must suffer eternal torture if they do not follow some paranoiac priest.

The atheist's philosophy is of the enjoyment of life, not one of morbidity and fear of antagonizing an imaginary god, manufactured by priestly leaders of ignorant primitive tribes.

Chapter Forty Seven

Men, Fit to Be Called Men, Must Have the Courage to Express Themselves

Courage is one of the grandest characteristics of man and it is also one of the rarest. When a man has arrived at a conclusion, he is willing to stand by it, he is not afraid to express it, especially when that conviction concerns matters which vitally affect his own welfare. When it comes to matters of religion, the average man is fearful of meeting the opposition of the clergy or of their blind followers. As a matter of fact, they can do him no real damage or injury. From childhood he has been bluffed, taught to leave such matters to priests and preachers. It is to be remembered that the latter do not want discussion of any religious matters except by themselves, as a free dis-

cussion by all interested parties always promotes doubt in the minds of the hearers. It is also to be remembered that leaders of any religion understand that the most important factor in surviving is the suppression of all other religions.

It is difficult to present antireligious views in the public press, or over the radio, which is under the control of the United States Federal Communications Commission. Most publicly owned halls are not available for the discussion of anti-religious subjects.

The average man accepts the customs of his country because he is afraid of criticism by business associates or social acquaintances.

There are great benefits to be gained by the courageous expression of doubt and criticism regarding common religious practices. From the standpoint of taxes alone, the churches that own billions of dollars worth of property, from which their leaders derive bounteous salaries and comfortable livings, save their taxes at the expense of the other taxpayers, who must pay more in order to provide for church exemptions. The elimination of tax exemption for religious property would reduce taxes on all other citizens, possibly by as much as 10 per cent.

The churches and religious institutions have generally suppressed science, progress, and research. They have murdered scientists, progressives, independents, doubters. They have destroyed untold numbers of the most intelligent people who refused to accept openly their absurd and ridiculous doctrines. Had there been no suppression of science during the dark ages, had men like Galileo been encouraged instead of suppressed, had the energy of observing foolish church customs been put to constructive purposes, the world would be centuries ahead of today. Every courageous man can do his part to advance science and the progress of civilization by openly expressing himself against the superstitions of the present day. Each progressive step increases the happiness and comfort of all.

Beyond the other matters referred to, it ought to be a satisfaction to the individual to know that he has enough manhood in him to be able to say what he thinks, to know that he is not a moral coward.

Possibly there are, among a thousand citizens, a handful of men, who get great satisfaction by doing things which rebound to the benefit and happiness of their fellow citizens. In fact, most of the

progress of civilization has been a result of the efforts of this class of men, many of whom have paid with their lives because of their opposition to the church.

Such men often receive the commendation of their fellow men, and that is worth much to almost any man. It is to a certain extent, proof that the point presented has been carried and approved. It represents a reaping of the fruits of the ideals which have been sown.

Thus, there is everything to gain by a courageous opposition to those things which we know are wrong, and much to lose, not the least of which is our self esteem, when we cringe before the straw men of religions.

Our children, descendants, and successors are entitled to our best efforts in their behalf for progress, civilization, and a better world to live in.

Chapter Forty Eight

Reasons Why Reasoning Men Discard Religion

There is no real evidence of God. Religions were founded by ignorant, superstitious, unscientific, people.

The Bible abounds with contradictions from beginning to end.

The actions of the prophets and Christ appear to be the actions of insane men.

The Christian religion is not based on reason.

Religion has not been a progressive influence; it has led to centuries of bloodshed, warfare, disease, persecution, ignorance, and poverty.

The priests and preachers and religious leaders profit by advertising their religions.

There must be something wrong with religion when its supporters try to suppress all investigation and inquiry into it.

If the God of the Christians or of any other religion had the power claimed for him, he would have made no unbelievers.

If the God of the Christians or of any other religion really existed, he would favor his followers instead of exterminating them.

Good men are caused to suffer, while many evil men prosper.

People accept their religion as true on the word of their parents, rulers, or religious leaders.

The religious leaders promise things after death because they can't deliver them now.

The Bible is full of immorality, inaccuracies, mistakes, conflicts, war, murder, bloodshed, unhappiness, distortion, and cannot be a divine revelation.

Many of the so-called elect of God were murderers, adulterers, deceivers, liars, and sensualists. A good god would have exterminated them instead of innocent children to the third and fourth generations.

The Christian religion has not been able to prevent war, crime, poverty.

The churches have done all they could to prevent scientific progress.

Most religions are intolerant.

If there were a God, he would not have made atheists and then threaten to punish them for being unbelievers.

The so-called miracles such as a whale swallowing Jonah, Joshua making the sun stand still, Moses making snakes from sticks, Christ making dead men revive, are contrary to reason and nature.

The Bible itself is so conflicting that it denies the ideas it tries to propagate. The great benefactors of mankind have not been religious believers and often had great opposition from the churches.

The Christian religion is a morbid religion of unhappiness.

All efforts should be directed toward the enjoyment of this life which we know, rather than toward a fictional life after death.

Reason is unable to find evidence of life after death.

Reason is unable to find evidence of any God, spirits, ghosts, angels, devils or other fancied beings imagined by the feeble minded or ignorant forefathers of the race.

A good god would not allow unhappiness on earth.

Human progress does not require the superstition and ritual which encumber religion.

The leaders of religious movements are not unusually intelligent men, but often dishonest, insane, or fanatical.

The most intelligent men discard religion entirely.

Science and religion are in direct conflict.

The churches are money making and money grabbing institutions.

Church members are not renowned for their fairness, tolerance, justice, and intelligence.

Believers of the Christian religion are sick, suffer, are poor, die just like all other men, and in fact, the most religious countries are the most ignorant and poorest.

Religious believers furnish a much higher percentage of criminals than do atheists.

There are thousands of creeds and cults; each claims the other wrong; if there were one true God, he would let the people know how to worship.

It is unreasonable to believe that God would make people sinful, then punish them for doing what he had put in their minds to do.

The God of the Bible is cruel, vindictive, vengeful, petty, jealous, and a lover of blood and burnt sacrifices.

All the evidence from the Bible, and outside of it, is that it is the accumulation of the writings of primitive, ignorant people, especially of a priest-clan which used the threats of God to exact tribute from its followers.

The growth of freedom of and from religion always increases the prosperity, happiness, and well-being of any country.

In England and the United States where religious freedom is greatest, progress and prosperity is greatest.

Religious institutions attempt to interfere with the personal liberties of the people.

They get exemption from taxes and freedom from military service for their priests and preachers.

Religions try to force stupid, unreasonable, unnatural customs on the people.

Religions have persecuted, and still do, those who do not believe as they do. They have helped exterminate the best minds for thousands of years.

Religion is based on faith - not fact or reason. Intelligent men will rely only on facts, reason, and science.

Most of the propagators and followers of religions are not students of all religions and of atheism. They have no right to say theirs is the only true religion until they have studied all others and also the arguments of atheism.

No man has ever returned from heaven to tell about it.

Many teachings in the Bible have been proved false by modern science.

The Bible and the Christian religion did not eliminate slavery and the churches supported this terrible system for centuries.

Millions of people have been killed because of religion.

Cruel, selfish rulers have used it to suppress their people.

Religion does not have a sensible ethical code.

Religions are a garbled mass of conflicting and ridiculous doctrines and commandments.

Religions have kept the people's minds off their main purpose in life, which is to provide happiness on this earth.

Religion, more than any other factor, is the cause of ignorance, poverty, crime, insanity, unhappiness, war.

It serves no benefit to humanity here or hereafter.

It is a cause of hypocrisy and dishonesty.

Religion takes thousands of people out of useful productive life and permits them to remain parasites to be supported by the rest of the nation.

If the Christian religion, backed by Jesus Christ and an omnipotent God, cannot make a better world in the thousands of years they have been in power, it is time the whole mess was eliminated and a new start made.

Most of the followers of religions are unthinking, ignorant hypocrites. Most people do not believe most of the things the Bible says. They attempt to explain them by mumbling about poetry, allegory, mystical explanations.

The followers of religions are, for the most part, the believing type of people left after the most intelligent men were killed for expressing doubt as to the truth of the absurd doctrines they were ordered to believe.

If people were not forced to go to church or Sunday school when they were young and were allowed to await the reasoning powers of maturity, they would not believe religious doctrines.

Many nations were forced by the sword to accept their religion. The people were not spontaneously religious.

Religions have had to have the backing of national governments here and abroad in the way of subsidies and tax exemptions in order to survive.

Because a man must be ignorant or a hypocrite to believe in religion and because religion has such influence on the masses, only ignorant or hypocritical men can hold high political offices, thus religion indirectly forces us to allow the poorest kind of men to lead the nations.

They have developed because it is to the profit of their leaders to have them grow and turn in more revenue - into many billions of dollars a year at present.

If all the energy and money spent on churches was put to productive use the world would be better off.

If men's reason were developed instead of suppressed there would be more happiness.

The churches oppose the development of reason. They oppose the principles of democracy, for their God is a tyrant and a dictator who threatens, and his representatives threaten, all unbelievers with eternal damnation.

Religion keeps the people from understanding and demanding their full rights to live and enjoy life.

The Christian religion is a morbid religion. It preaches no thought for this world, no thrift, just the guilt of all people, even babies just born.

The Christian religion tries to get control of public money to force its ideas on children, the Catholic church tries to keep the Church and State from being separated, and they force unbelievers and atheists to contribute to their support with public funds and by receiving tax exemptions.

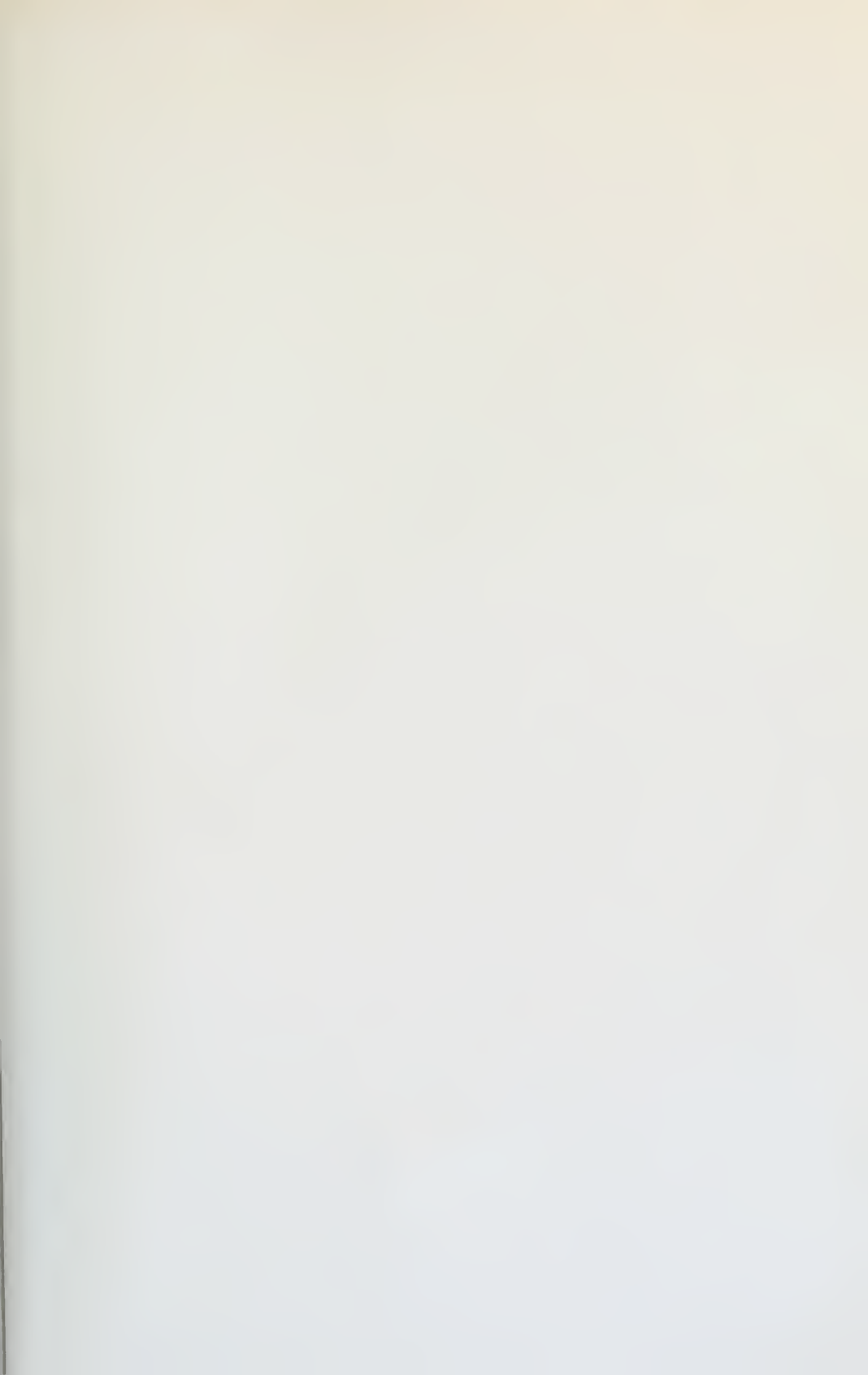
Church rituals are savage and primitive.

The Doctrine of the Trinity is impossible to understand.

The churches seek wealth and power more than they try to improve the condition of the people.

They fill men's minds with fear, intolerance, greed and hypocrisy, and set bad examples in their quest for more power and influence.

If there were no profit in religion it would not long survive.



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